

CommUNITY Allies

Coming Together While Apart

A Vacation Bible School experience for the whole family



To Families, Guardians, and Other Facilitators of this Curriculum,

Before we get started, thank you for participating in this learning experience with us! We believe that children have the right to learn and should share in meaningful conversations about difficult topics, including racial inequities and injustice. We know that conversations about race and racism can be challenging for children—and for adults. However, we cannot shrink away from the discomfort. We must lean into this work with compassion, empathy, and the desire to learn and do better. Children absorb the world around them and are constantly trying to make sense of it. We want to help them along their journey by speaking honestly. We empower children to be agents of change by helping them develop the language and tools they need to confront an unjust world—just as we empower ourselves!

Here are some points to guide you as you facilitate these lessons and discussions with the children in your care:

1. This is important work that must be done to create real change. If we don't talk about racism or other injustices, we will never be able to fix them.
2. It may feel uncomfortable to have conversations about race. Do it anyway! Discomfort is a sign you are growing and learning, and it will get easier with practice.
3. You may feel afraid of getting it wrong or not knowing what to say at all. It is okay to say, "I don't know," or "Let's come back to this." Being honest about your own learning, asking questions, and doing research with your child will model curiosity and a growth mindset.
4. Do the best you can. We are never done learning and growing—and many of us were never taught to be allies or anti-racist ourselves, so we are all learning together. When you make a mistake, acknowledge it, and learn from it. You will do better the next time.

During our time together, we will be highlighting some articles that provide further detail about how to talk with children about race. These articles will be located at the beginning of most days and we invite you to read through them before engaging with the children in that day's activities.

Here is the first article that we invite you to read:

10 tips for teaching and talking to kids about race: <https://www.embracerace.org/resources/teaching-and-talking-to-kids>

With care and commitment to justice for all,

The CommUNITY Allies Team

Guide for Facilitating Curriculum

This program is designed to be used as a five day “virtual” Bible school program. You may work through this curriculum at your own pace if you choose. Our interactive portions are scheduled to take place between July 13-17, 2020.

Objectives:

- Understand identity and connection to build empathy
 - Explore ways to see yourself and the ways people see you
 - Explore aspects of identity that are unique, universal, seen and unseen
- Build language and understanding about social inequality and racism
 - Learn about concepts of perspective, justice, charity and mercy
 - Understand the importance of media representation for others and ourselves
 - Build awareness of who we share our world with and how we are connected
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be an Ally
 - Identify local problems and possible solutions
 - Develop an activist’s imagination, persistence, sense of responsibility, and passion for creating change in our communities and in the world
- Build community connections and compassion even while we are apart
- Deepen our faith by tying our actions and words to our values and beliefs

Each day begins with a short, welcoming video that shares our daily scripture passage. A second video introduces the themes for the day, expands on the Bible verse, and shares a related read-aloud story. Children should then work through the day’s content—the schedule may include crafts, coloring sheets, physical activities, social studies, stories of role models that exemplify the theme of the day, and music. When you have finished the daily content, review the closing section. The closing will invite you and your child(ren) to review, wrap-up, and discuss the major themes of the day. It will also direct the children to the CommUNITY Allies website where they can post an idea or question, and share their creations from the day. We will use Padlet as a platform for this interactive online gathering space. Children can share pictures, videos, and text on this platform. They will also be able to see posts by other children.

We have written this curriculum to be accessible for elementary students. Some sections include a primary (K-2) and upper elementary (3-5) version and are labeled as such. As a facilitator, you know your learner best, so feel free to scale the materials and expectations for younger or older children.

Schedule (about one hour per day):

Day	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Scriptures (NIV)	1 Peter 3:8	Micah 6:8	Review 1 Peter 3:8 & Micah 6:8	1 Corinthians 12:26	Review 1 Peter 3:8 & Micah 6:8 1 Cor 12:26
Theme Story Time	SELF IN OTHERS <i>The Day You Begin</i>	JUSTICE & MERCY <i>Something Happened in Our Town</i>	SHARING THE WORLD <i>Last Stop on Market Street</i>	CONNECTION <i>Say Something</i>	COMMUNITY IN ACTION <i>A Church for All</i>
Craft	Paper Mask		Mandala	Paper Chains	
Role Models	Curtis Acosta & Marley Dias	Isra Hirsi & Vic Barrett	Madison Edwards & Cole Rasenberger	Jerome Foster II & Greta Thunberg	Autumn Peltier & Jerrell Davis
Activities	Representation Scavenger Hunt	Obstacle Course, Charity + Social Justice (2-feet) Memory Game	Exploring Nature walk/ Backyard Observation	Jump Rope/ Jumping Jacks Rube Goldberg info@communityalliesVBS.com	Research
Community in Action		Food Insecurity Introduce Food Drive		Paper Chain Challenge	Food Bank Event
Coloring Page	In Lak'Ech & 1 Peter 3:8 Coloring Sheet	Micah 6:8 Coloring Sheet	CommUNITY Allies	1 Corinthians 12:26 Coloring Sheet	Most Beautiful World Imaginable Worksheet info@communityalliesVBS.com
Closing Discussion Padlet LINKS	Discussion Board Day 1	Discussion Board Day 2	Discussion Board Day 3	Discussion Board Day 4	Discussion Board Day 5

Students post in the online discussion board. They can upload pictures or videos or write about their experience.

Day One

SELF IN OTHERS

Peter 3:8. “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.”

In Lak'Ech

(excerpt from Pensamiento Serpentino by Luís Valdez)

Tú eres mi otro yo.

You are my other me.

Si te hago daño a ti,

If I do harm to you,

Me hago daño a mi mismo.

I do harm to myself.

Si te amo y respeto,

If I love and respect you,

Me amo y respeto yo.

I love and respect myself.

Facilitator articles (read before starting the day’s activities with children):

10 tips for reading picture books with children through a race-conscious lens:

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/10-tips-for-reading-picture-books-with-children-through-a-race-conscious-lens>

8 tips for choosing “good” picture books featuring diverse, BIPOC characters:

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/8-tips-for-choosing-good-picture-books-featuring-diverse-bipoc-characters>

Day One Theme Discussion and Story (video on website)

Hello and welcome COMMUNITY Allies! My name is Whitney and I will help start each day of Vacation Bible School with you! Usually we are all together in person, but this VBS, like other things during the COVID 19 pandemic, is different. So, instead of starting our day in the sanctuary with music and talking about our themes for the day, we will start with a video message from me, to you. Sometimes we will talk about an idea or question. Other days, we will talk about a passage from the Bible or read a story. I invite you to think about the things we discuss in these videos as you complete each day's activities. Even though we are not able to be together in person, we look forward to learning with you!

Today, our theme is seeing ourselves in others. We are going to start out with a verse from the Bible 1 Peter 3:8. "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble."

In this passage, God is calling us to join together and to love one another with an open heart and an open mind. God is telling us to listen to the **perspectives**, or stories, of others and to **empathize** with how they are feeling. We do this by recognizing how the person feels, and then showing them, they are not alone because we are with them.

This passage also connects to a poem titled, *Pensamiento Serpentino*, by Luís Valdez, which is based on a Mayan concept called *In Lak'Ech*. This poem will be read to you by Carlos Arguelles.

Tú eres mi otro yo.

You are my other me.

Si te hago daño a ti,

If I do harm to you,

Me hago daño a mi mismo.

I do harm to myself.

Si te amo y respeto,

If I love and respect you,

Me amo y respeto yo.

I love and respect myself.

Both *In Lak'Ech* and the Bible passage tell us that we are all connected to each other and our actions affect others. That is why it is important that our actions are rooted in love and respect for others and ourselves.

We are going to read a book, titled *The Day You Begin*, written by Jacqueline Woodson and Illustrated by Rafael López. This book talks about how sometimes we feel like there is no one else around us who we share similarities with, but that when we reach out to learn more about people, we can find similarities and connections that might have been hidden.

*reading of *The Day You Begin**

There is no one else quite like you or me, but sharing our stories can help us find similarities. And that can help us become more connected and understanding of each other.

Today we will be doing activities that will help us think about the importance of knowing ourselves so we can better understand others.

As you work on the activities, think about how knowing yourself can help you connect with others.

Day One Craft- Identity Masks

Summary: We are making two-sided masks as a way of exploring our identities and the ways we can build connections with others. There are parts of us that everyone can see, and there are parts of us that require us to learn about and empathize with each other to understand.

Materials:

Paper Plate

Scissors

Pencils and/or pens for drawing

Paints, crayons or markers for adding color

Optional: a hole punch and elastic, string or pipe cleaners; or a popsicle stick, tape, and craft knife (with adult supervision only) and cutting mat or cardboard

Instructions:

1. Turn your plate upside down and draw the holes for the eyes. You can figure out where to place the holes by holding the plate in front of your face and marking where your eyes are.
2. Next, cut out the eyes with your craft knife on a cutting mat or piece of cardboard. You can also carefully use a pair of scissors. Younger students should ask an adult for help.
3. Now, it's time to draw your face. You might start with your nose, hair, and mouth. But what else makes your face special and yours? You can choose the emotion or expression on your mask. Add the other details that make your face yours—maybe you have freckles, or a scar, glasses or a hat or headband.
4. Once you're happy with your drawing it's time to paint or color it in. One of the sample masks shows mixed watercolor paints to match a dark brown skin color, then layered more paint on top for rosy cheeks. On another sample, crayons and markers were used—then construction paper and glue to make a bow! Choose whatever materials you'd like to use to be creative.
5. When we're done with adding color, and any paint is dry again, you can use scissors to cut around the outside of the mask, if needed, or cut the nose flap on the bottom and sides. You can also embellish your mask with any added details.
6. Now, flip over your mask to add in the parts of your identity that people do not see. Start by dividing your plate into three areas: **needs, talents, loves**. In each area, include words and drawings of things that fit in that category. These are things that people may not see when they look at you, but are still a part of your identity.
7. Optional: Finally, punch a hole on either side of the mask and thread through some elastic, string, or even pipe cleaner. Or, you can glue or tape on a popsicle stick at the bottom of the mask to make a handheld mask instead of a wearable one.

(continued on next page)

Questions to Discuss or Think About:

1. Our Identity Masks have two sides, but when someone is looking at you, they can only see one side. Could you tell what someone else has on the back of their mask just by looking at the front? And, to flip the question around, if you saw the back of someone's mask, would you know how the front looked?
2. How do we learn about the information on the back side of other people's masks? If you had a **talent** in common with someone else, how would you find out?
3. We wrote three categories on the insides of our masks: **needs**, **talents**, **loves**. Is there overlap in what you have on the inside of your mask and what others have? What **needs** or **loves** do you think most people have?

Examples:



Day One Role Models (Written for Primary Grades K-2)



Figure 1 Photo reprinted with permission from Curtis Acosta

Curtis Acosta

This story is about a teacher. One thing that teachers do is try to help their students. Before we read this story, can you think of a teacher that you know who has helped you? Discuss how this teacher helped you and how you felt when you had their help.

This is Curtis Acosta. He was a teacher in Arizona. Most of the students in his district were **Hispanic**, (see note) which means that person's family comes from a Spanish-speaking country, like many of the countries in Central or South America. (Canada, Mexico and The United States are in North America.) Curtis saw that his students were **struggling**. They were having trouble learning and many of them stopped going to school before they were even finished.

Curtis wanted to find a way to help his students do better in school. He knew that in schools in the US, stories are often told from the **perspective**, or view, of white people—and that is a problem because it means the perspectives of all other people aren't included. So, Curtis and other teachers decided to tell the stories that reflected the identities, history and cultures of the students in his classroom.

The teachers encouraged the kids to be proud of who they were, to be independent thinkers, and to stand up for themselves. Teachers would start their classes by **reciting**, or saying, a poem in both English and Spanish (En Lak'Ech) that connects people to each other: "You are my other me." In Lak'Ech is based on ancient Mayan ways of thinking and knowing.

Curtis' new way of teaching was very successful! Students were doing much better in school and on state tests! They were much, much more likely to finish high school and go to college because they felt included and connected to what they were learning!

However, some **politicians**, the people who make rules and laws, didn't like the program. They felt that classes should go back to the way they were before. In the United States, white Americans have had the most power and it is their stories and perspectives that we hear the most. These politicians felt that to teach any other way would be un-American, but Chicanx/Latinx students (as well as other students who are people of color) are American too. This means that their stories are also American stories.

In 2010, the politicians who didn't like this program created a law in the State of Arizona that made it illegal to teach **Ethnic Studies** in public schools. Ethnic Studies classes focus on the **experiences and perspectives** (stories) of non-white people in the United States. The law also banned many of the books with Hispanic perspectives from the schools. Seven years later a judge ruled that this law was illegal. The judge said it was **unconstitutional**, or against the most powerful rules, to suppress a group of people because of their race. In other words, the judge said it is against the law to do something that will hurt people based on the color of their skin or where their families came from.

This story was talked about on the news, so lots of other schools in the United States found out about Curtis's way of teaching and how successful it was. While law makers in Arizona were trying to end the program, other schools around the country started to use it! Ethnic Studies programs started being taught around the country!

Curtis Acosta saw that students in his school were not performing well because their stories and culture were excluded from their learning. He wrote curriculum that encouraged kids to explore and celebrate their identities and culture. In doing so, he made a positive difference for students that spread beyond just his own school.

“. . . I think when we grow up with a single narrative, we can't see each other, we can't humanize one another, because we really don't know each other . . .” – Curtis Acosta

Note: Hispanic, Xicanx/Chicanx and Latinx are all imperfect terms to describe a multitude of lived experiences. Hispanic is tied to Spanish language and culture; as a US-recognized ethnicity, it is also tied to imperialism and colonialism. Chicano/Xicanx links to indigenous heritage in the geographic areas currently known as the US's southwest, where Acosta taught. Latinx is tied to a wider geographic region, and is the most commonly used term in the Pacific Northwest, where this curriculum was written. We chose to use the specific terms used in the program titles, by Acosta, or as referenced in US government data, and to default to Chicax/Latinx to be as inclusive and descriptive as possible.

For more information, start here:

https://www.exploratorium.edu/sites/default/files/Genial_2017_Terms_of_Usage.pdf



Figure 2 Photo by Linda Nylind/eyevine/Redux

Marley Dias

It is not just adults who have seen a problem in education and worked to make it better. Kids have done this too! An example of a kid who has made a difference in schools is Marley Dias from New Jersey. Marley is African-American and she wanted to read books that had African-American girls as the main character. Marley was **frustrated** because she couldn't find books in her school library with main characters who looked like her.

In 2015, at the age of 10, Marley started a book drive to collect books with black girls as the **main characters**. Within just a few months, her book drive collected more than 9,000 books! That is more books than some libraries have! Marley donated the books to schools around the country and as far away as Jamaica.

Marley's book drive helped schools to **diversify** their libraries. That means she helped make sure school libraries had books with different kinds of kids as the main character. Her book drive got a lot of attention in newspapers, magazines, on TV and on the internet. All the attention made more people start talking about the need for diverse books. Marley has since written her own book, Marley Dias Gets it Done: And So Can You! in which she encourages kids to be **activists**.

View video on: <https://www.njtvonline.org/news/video/11-year-old-marley-dias-creates-change-through-1000blackgirlbooks-campaign/>

Food for thought:

Our scripture talks about how we are to be in relation with others. In other words, how we think about, treat, and interact with others. The poem In Lak'Ech says that the way we treat others affects us as well. How do you feel about yourself when you are being kind and have good relationships with others? How do you feel about yourself when you are not treating others well and not getting along with others?

Sometimes it's hard to know how to show kindness and respect to others. It's easy to assume that if you want/need something then everyone else will want/need that same thing. That's true for basic needs—everyone needs food, and shelter, for example, but we are also all different people. We have different identities (skin color, gender, nationality, culture, abilities, resources, personality, etc.) that affect how we experience life and what we notice and don't notice (our perspective). In order to show kindness to others we have to take time to listen to their stories and let them tell us what they need and how we can be a good friend. How do you find out what your friends or family want/need?

Day One Role Models (Written for Upper Elementary Grades 3-5)



Figure 3 Photo reprinted with permission from Curtis Acosta

Curtis Acosta

Curtis Acosta taught high school English in Tucson, Arizona in a majority Hispanic (see note) school district. Chicana/Latina students in the U.S. are less likely than other ethnic groups to finish high school or attend college. These national trends were no different in Acosta's own district. In 1997, the school district in which Acosta worked voted to create a Hispanic Studies Department in their schools with the goal of lowering the school dropout rate.

In 1998, Acosta led the development of the Mexican American Studies program. This program integrated Mexican history and culture into the classrooms, and encouraged kids to think critically and realize their own power and potential. Teachers in the program would open their classes by reciting *In Lak'Ech*, a poem based on Mayan philosophical thought.

The Mexican American Studies program was a remarkable success! Students who went through the program performed better on all their standardized tests, were more likely to graduate from high school and more likely to attend college. The high school dropout rate for students going through the Mexican American Studies program was only 2.5% compared to the national dropout rate for Hispanic students which stood at 56%.

The program received the attention of some white politicians who were uncomfortable with this approach to teaching and the different perspectives that were being presented. In 2010, the State of Arizona banned Ethnic Studies in Arizona public schools, including many of the books that had been used in the program. The classes could no longer be held, and many of the books written with a Hispanic perspective were removed from the schools. Seven years later, this bill was overturned when a federal judge found that the law was racially motivated and violated the Constitutional rights of the students.

The actions of these lawmakers as well as the kids and community members who fought to try to keep the Mexican American Studies program alive received national attention. Other educators across the country saw the profound positive impact that this program had on students. The result was that it started a movement in a number of school districts and states across the country. These educators

recognized the difference that culturally relevant teaching has on student outcomes. Ethnic Studies programs began popping up around the country.

Curtis Acosta went on to create his own education consulting company, “Acosta Latino Learning Partnership,” and co-founded the Xicano Institute for Teaching and Organizing. Through these organizations Acosta helps schools around the nation develop their own Ethnic Studies programs.

“ . . . I think when we grow up with a single narrative, we can’t see each other, we can’t humanize one another, because we really don’t know each other . . . ”

Curtis Acosta saw that Chicax/Latinx students in his school were not reflected in their curriculum. He recognized that the educational system in the U.S. has historically had a single narrative. That is, history and literature are largely taught from the perspective of white Americans. Acosta set out to fix this problem by creating a culturally relevant curriculum so that non-white students could learn about and celebrate their identities and culture.

Note: Hispanic, Xicanx/Chicanx and Latinx are all imperfect terms to describe a multitude of lived experiences. Hispanic is tied to Spanish language and culture; as a US-recognized ethnicity, it is also tied to imperialism and colonialism. Chicano/Xicanx links to indigenous heritage in the geographic areas currently known as the US’s southwest, where Acosta taught. Latinx is tied to a wider geographic region, and is the most commonly used term in the Pacific Northwest, where this curriculum was written. We chose to use the specific terms used in the program titles, by Acosta, or as referenced in US government data, and to default to Chicax/Latinx to be as inclusive and descriptive as possible.

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Figure 4 Photo by Linda Nylind/eyevine/Redux

Marley Dias

It is not just adults who have seen a problem in education and strove to make it better. Kids have done this too—for example, Marley Dias from New Jersey. As an African-American girl, Marley also noticed that she was not seeing herself represented in the classroom. Marley was frustrated that she could not find books in the classroom that featured main characters who looked like her.

In 2015, at the age of 10, Marley started a book drive focused on books in which Black girls are the main characters. Within just the first few months her book drive collected more than 9,000 books and then continued to collect more. Marley donated the books to schools around the country and as far away as Jamaica.

In addition to helping schools diversify their libraries, Marley’s book drive also drew public attention to the need to have more diversity in children’s literature. Marley has since written her own book, Marley Dias Gets it Done: And So Can You! in which she encourages kids to be activists.

“Frustration is fuel that can lead to the development of an innovative and useful idea.”

View video on: <https://www.njtvonline.org/news/video/11-year-old-marley-dias-creates-change-through-1000blackgirlbooks-campaign/>

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Sometimes it’s hard to know how to show kindness and respect to others. It’s easy to assume that if you want/need something then everyone else will want/need that same thing. That’s true for basic needs—everyone needs food, and shelter, for example, but we are also all different people. We have different identities (skin color, gender, nationality, culture, abilities, resources, personality, etc.) that affect how we experience life and what we notice and don’t notice (our perspective). In order to show kindness to others we have to take time to listen to their stories and let them tell us what they need and how we can be a good friend. How do you find out what your friends or family want/need

Representation

In hearing the stories of our role models today we can see the importance of seeing ourselves reflected in the world around us through things such as books and education. Seeing our own stories gives us a way to understand ourselves and our world in terms that we can identify with. It allows us to feel a sense of belonging in our society. Seeing ourselves reflected in positive ways in media (such as books and movies) and education helps us to build a positive self-image.

It is also important that we hear the stories of others. It helps us to better understand others and gives us insight into ourselves as well. Learning the stories of others leads us to be more empathetic and less biased. It allows us to better understand our world, the people in it and others in our communities. Learning the stories of people who are not like us promotes unity, compassion, love and humility, just like today's Bible verse calls us to be.

In our country we have what is called a single narrative which Curtis Acosta referred to in the quote at the end of our profile of him. That means that the stories we read, the movies we see, the history we learn in school, are primarily told about people who are white from the perspective of people who are white. Here are some statistics from 2016-2017 collected by a researcher, Robin DiAngelo, that illustrates this.

Congress: 90% white

Governors: 96% white

Top military advisers: 100% white

President and vice president: 100% white

Current POTUS [President's] cabinet: 91% white

People who decide which TV shows we see: 93% white

People who decide which books we read: 90% white

People who decide which news is covered: 85% white

People who decide which music is produced: 95% white

Teachers: 83% white

Full-time college professors: 84% white

Owners of men's pro-football teams: 97% white

<https://www.yesmagazine.org/democracy/2017/06/30/no-i-wont-stop-saying-white-supremacy/>

We can work to change our society so that it better reflects the voices of all the people in it. One way we can start this is to look in our own lives and at our own homes. Whose voices are you hearing?

Day One Activity- Representation Scavenger Hunt

The activity below is designed for you to explore your own bookshelves. But, you don't have to do this activity at home. If you are able, you can visit your local library and pick a random sample of about ten(10) children's books that feature people (not animals). Otherwise, skip to the second page and try to answer the same questions based on what you find in your Google search.

Home Library (or Public Library)

How many books can you find that feature a person of color? How many of these books feature a person of color who is the main character and not a side kick or minor character?

Which different races are represented in these books (Black, Asian, Chicanx/Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native American, etc.)?

How many books can you find that feature a person who has a physical difference (for example, someone who is in a wheelchair, or is deaf, or blind)?

How many of your books feature female main characters? How many feature male main characters?

How many books explore religions or cultural traditions that are different from your own?

Online search (Representation Scavenger Hunt, Continued)

Search online for children's books lists. You can use search words such as, "top children's books," or "top children's chapter books." You will find lots of different lists. Follow a link to one of these and look at the books they highlight. If the list is too long, just look at the first ten (10) that feature people (not animals). You will have to base your observations on the covers if you are not familiar with the books. It's not a perfect research method, but you will still get a pretty good idea.

How many books can you find that feature a person of color? How many of these books feature a person of color who is the main character and not a side kick or minor character?

What different races are represented in these books (Black, Asian, Chicanx/Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native American, etc.)?

How many books can you find that feature a person who has a physical difference (for example someone who is in a wheelchair, or is deaf, or blind)?

How many of your books feature female main characters? How many feature male main characters?

How many books explore religions or cultural traditions that are different from your own?

You can make these same observations about the movies and TV shows you watch.

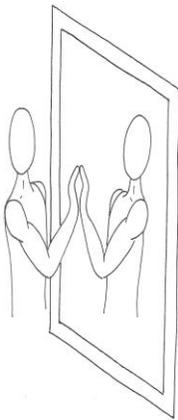
Take time this week to share something you found from your scavenger hunt with people in your household. It could be a book, or online video of a book, or video/show. The key though is that it needs to feature (as in have a main character) someone who is not well-represented in media and literature. A couple examples of this would be a person of color or someone who has a physical difference.

Day One Coloring Sheet

(Full Sheet Found in Student Activity Pack)

IN LAKECH

Tú eres mi **OTRO** yo
Si te **HAZO** daño a ti,
Me hago **DAÑO** a mi misma.
Si te **AMO** y respeto,
Me amo y **RESPECTO** yo.



You are my **OTHER** me
If I **DO** harm to you,
I do **HARM** to myself.
If I **LOVE** and respect you
I love and **RESPECT** myself.

EMPATHY

Finally, all of you should be of one mind.

Sympathize with each other

Love each other as brothers and sisters.

Be tender hearted and keep a humble attitude.

~ 1 Peter 3:8 ~



Day One Closing Discussion

Today we learned about seeing ourselves in others. Our story, *The Day You Begin*, taught us about how sometimes we feel like there is no one else around us who we share similarities with, but when we share our stories, we find out connections we have to others as well as ways we are unique. Our role models, Curtis Acosta and Marley Dias, taught us that representation is when we see ourselves in the stories and people around us and that representation makes us feel connected and important. We learned that listening to the stories of others helps us better understand people who are different from us. Listening to the stories of others helps us have empathy, love, compassion for them, and connection with them. This is what God told us was important in our passage from 1 Peter.

Our scavenger hunt taught us that the books and movies we see, and the history we learn, is mostly told from the view of people who are white. Stories from the **perspective**, or view, of people of color, are largely left out. This **single narrative**, or one story, means that the truth of many people's experiences does not get told.

By making masks, we learned that there are ways that the world sees us and there are ways that we see ourselves. What we see, and what the world sees, can be very different. We discussed ways we could learn about similarities between your mask and the masks of others.

I invite you to go to our website (www.communityalliesvbs.com) and visit the discussion board page. On the page, share something you made and/or something you learned today using the link below*. You may share a picture, video, or writing.

[Discussion Board Day 1](#)

*Please note this discussion board will only be monitored during the week of July 13-17.

Day Two

JUSTICE AND MERCY

Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Facilitator articles (read before starting the day’s activities with children):

They’re not too young to talk about race: <http://www.childrenscommunityschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/theyre-not-too-young-1.pdf>

How to talk to your kids about protests and racism:

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/01/health/protests-racism-talk-to-children-wellness/index.html>

Day Two Theme Discussion and Story (video on website)

Hi Allies! Welcome to day two! Today we are learning about how to live with justice and mercy. God calls us to live with justice and mercy in Micah 6:8 (NIV) which says, “He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

So, what does this mean? First, let’s talk about how God shows us what is good. God shows us what is good by sending messages right to our hearts! When I experience something good, my heart feels like a warm, shining light and that shining light spreads all the way from my nose to my toes and makes me smile and I feel happy. When God shows me that something is good, my heart feels like sunshine on a sunny day. An example of something that fills my heart with this feeling is friendship. Think of a time when God showed you something good. How did it feel?

When we see something wrong, God tells us about that too. For me, the feeling is like a storm. My heart feels dark, and dreary, and cold. Sometimes it feels like loud wind and thunder are pounding so hard in my heart that I want to explode. And sometimes tears fall like rain from my eyes. Sometimes I feel like I want to run away from this feeling. When I feel like this, I know it is God showing me that something is wrong. I feel like this when I see people of color being hurt and killed because of their skin color. I also feel like this when I see the environment being hurt or destroyed. Think of a time when God showed you something wrong. How did it feel?

So, what does God want us to do when we experience something that is wrong? God wants us to act with justice and mercy.

One way we can describe **justice** is love in action. We can think of **mercy** as helping someone, or something, who is hurt or in danger. We can think of mercy like someone helping you get a Band-Aid after you trip and fall over a rock and scrape your knee. Justice is then moving the rock out of the way so you, nor anyone else, gets hurt by it again. Acting with justice and mercy towards others is being an **ally**. An important part of being an ally is listening to the needs of the people we are trying to help.

The last phrase in the passage says, “walk humbly with your God.” To be **humble** means that we don’t need to call attention to ourselves as we work for justice and mercy. Allies work to lift up others because that is what God calls people to do, not to get praise and glory for their actions.

Today you are going to explore some examples of justice and mercy happening in the world.

Before we begin today’s activities, we are going to read a book together. This book is called *Something Happened in Our Town* by Marianne Celano, Marietta Collins, and Ann Hazzard. The book is illustrated by Jennifer Zivoin and is being read with permission from American Psychological Association. In this book, a Black man is killed by the police and the children in the book, one Black and one white, want to understand why. This book will help us think more about justice and how to identify injustice.

reading of Something Happened in Our Town

Now that we read that we finished reading *Something Happened in Our Town*, think about how the book made you feel. What messages did God send you about the killing of the Black man in the story? Did you feel any of the feelings we talked about for when God shows us that something is wrong? How about

when Emma and Josh stood up for Omad? Did you feel any of the feelings we talked about for when God shows us that something is good?

I invite you now to work through today's activities exploring concepts related to justice and mercy.

Day Two Role Models (Written for Primary Grades K-2)



Figure 5 Photo by Liz Ferguson/Rainforest Alliance

Isra Hirsi

Isra Hirsi, born Feb. 2003, is an American **social justice** and **environmental justice advocate** from Minneapolis, Minnesota. This means that Isra speaks out and works to change things for people who need help (social justice) and to make sure that all people have access to a safe and healthy environment (environmental justice). Environment refers to nature. **Nature** includes plants, animals, air, water, and more! Isra parents taught her about how problems in our country affect different groups of people. They encouraged her to **advocate**, or stand up, for people who are being **harmed**, or hurt, and told her that she could make a difference in the world.

At the age of 12 Isra became active in the Black Lives Matter movement, sometimes called BLM. The Black Lives Matter Movement was founded in response to police brutality, and calls attention to way Black people in the US experience systemic racism, which means not just people being mean to each other, but systems like schools, and legal courts that operate unfairly. BLM works to change those things. Isra also got involved in groups that worked to keep people safe from gun violence.

In high school, Isra joined her school's environmental club. Before this, environmental justice was not something she had thought much about. She thought the movement was about saving natural places that were **distant**, or far, from where she lived and spent time. BLM and gun violence felt more personal to her.

In the club, she learned that about how environmental causes affected her directly, too. Environmental justice involves the quality of our air, land and water and how these things affect people everywhere. She learned that people have affected the climate (weather patterns), which is referred to as climate change. Isra learned that climate change and environmental issues such as **pollution**, or dirty air, and problems with drinking water are hurting people of color and people with very little money the most.

Isra knew how to stand up and speak out so she used her skills to advocate for environmental justice. In 2019 (at age 15) she helped start the U.S. Youth Climate Strike, and went on to become the **Executive Director**, or leader, of the group. The U.S. Youth Climate Strike is part of a world-wide movement, led by kids, that works to get governments, people who make laws and rules, to quickly make new laws to protect the environment.

Isra uses her voice to tell people how problems with environment are connected to other issues such as race and poverty. Her main goal is to get people of all races involved in the movement and to **advocate**, or speak up, for people who are most hurt by problems in the environment.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_WRe-9ArNI



Figure 6 Photo by Isthmus <https://isthmus.com/news/news/vic-barrett-is-at-center-of-lawsuit-to-force-action-on-clima/>

Vic Barrett

Vic Barrett is from White Plains, NY. When he was 12 years old his home was hit by **Hurricane Sandy** (a huge storm that caused lots of flooding and damage to people's homes). Vic and his mother spent time huddled in his mother's bedroom. They lost electricity and water. Some of Vic's friends lost their homes.

After Hurricane Sandy, Vic became aware of how climate change had a bigger effect on some people than others. Climate change mostly affected people who were already **vulnerable**, or in danger of being hurt in other ways. When Vic was 14, he got involved in an afterschool program that worked for **environmental justice**. (Remember that environmental justice is making sure that all people have access to a safe and healthy natural world.) It was through this experience that he really learned the connection between climate change and **human rights** (things that every person should have).

Vic also saw the effects of climate change and rising sea waters where his mother's family lives in a town in Honduras near the ocean. His mother and grandmother told him stories about how different the area looked now and how much closer the water is to his grandmother's home than it was when his mother was young. Vic learned how pollution from his home country, the United States, affected his family's community in Honduras. This made Vic take action!

Vic uses his own experiences, and the different parts of his **identity** (who he is), to show how climate change and environmental issues are connected to **race** (what a person looks like), **class** (how much money a person has), **immigration** (going from living in one country to living in another) and **war** (violence between two or more groups of people). He is a powerful speaker and organizer. He has given many speeches including one to a crowd of at least 60,000 people at the NYC Climate Strike in 2019. He has also spoken to world leaders at the United Nations in 2015 (at the age of 15) and 2016.

Vic is among a group of American youth who are suing the United States government. That means they think the government is breaking the law. Their lawsuit says that it is the government's job to protect the environment for future generations and to protect public land in the United States and that the government is not doing their job.

Vic's story written in his own words: <https://www.ourclimatevoices.org/2019/vicbarrett>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8APYUL6ANMc>

Food for thought:

Vic and Isra have a number of **intersecting identities** that they use to see and understand climate change and how it affects different people. That means that they understand climate change using more than one story. For example, Vic and Isra both identify as people of color so they understand climate change from the **perspective**, or story, of people of color. They are also both first-generation US citizens (their parents were born in different countries) so they understand climate change from the perspective, or story, of people from other countries. Vic and Isra are also able to share their experiences and observations with others who may not be able to see the issue from different perspectives.

During this pandemic we have seen that people are impacted differently based on who they are as well as what their resources are. For example, a child in a family who has easy access to a computer and internet has had a different experience of learning from home than a child who does not have these resources. Families who are healthy have had different experiences than those who have family members who have health risks. Families who are able to stay at home have had different experiences than those who have had to continue to go to work outside of the home. Some people have lost their jobs or income and others have not. These are things that are not isolated experiences. A family can have a computer and internet, members with health risks, and someone who has a job that they have to leave the home for. Or any combination of these things. There are many different ways in which people have experienced this same pandemic.

Day Two Role Models (Written for Upper Elementary Grades 3-5)



Figure 7 Photo by Liz Ferguson/Rainforest Alliance

Isra Hirsi

Isra Hirsi, born Feb. 2003, is an American social justice and environmental justice advocate. Conversations regarding social issues were commonplace in Isra's family. Her parents instilled in her that she had the ability to change the world and encouraged her to stand up and speak out for justice. Isra had been attending marches and rallies and using her voice from as young as 6 years old. At the age of 12 she became active in the Black Lives Matter Movement and in the fight for gun violence prevention. The Black Lives Matter Movement was founded in response to police brutality, and calls attention to way Black people in the US experience systemic racism, which means not just people being mean to each other, but systems like schools, and legal courts that operate unfairly.

As a freshman Isra joined the high school environmental club. Prior to this, environmental justice was not something she had thought much about. Her perception was that the movement concerned pristine areas that were distant from her own life experience. In the environmental club she learned more about how environmental issues and climate change intersected with other social issues and discovered the disproportionate effects of climate change on communities of color.

Isra went on to use her well-practiced skills in activism to advocate for environmental justice. In January 2019 (age 15) she co-founded the U.S. Youth Climate Strike, and is currently executive director of the group. The U.S. Youth Climate Strike is the American arm of the International Youth Climate Movement; a global youth driven movement with the aim of bringing attention to the urgency of climate change and affecting change in government environmental policy. Isra uses her voice to bring attention to the many ways in which environmental issues intersect with other social issues. She is particularly focused on diversifying the movement and advocating for those who are disproportionately affected by environmental issues.

“ . . . knowing that I have the power to inspire so many other young black girls and so many other like Muslim girls within the movement . . . gives me the motivation and joy to keep doing the work that I do.”

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_WRe-9ArNI



Figure 8 Photo by Isthmus <https://isthmus.com/news/news/vic-barrett-is-at-center-of-lawsuit-to-force-action-on-clima/>

Vic Barrett

Vic Barrett is from White Plains, NY. White Plains is a low-lying community near the Atlantic coast and as such, in recent years it has experienced more frequent storm surges due to climate change. When Vic was 12 years old, he experienced the potentially devastating effects of this firsthand when his home was hit by Hurricane Sandy. Vic and his mother spent time huddled in his mother's bedroom. They lost electricity and water. Some of Vic's friends lost their homes.

As a result of Hurricane Sandy, Vic became aware of how climate change had a bigger effect on some people than others. It particularly affected those who were already vulnerable. At the age of 14, he got involved in an afterschool program where he learned more about environmental justice. It was through this experience that he really began to understand the connection between climate change and human rights.

Vic also saw the effects of climate change and rising sea waters where his mother's family lived in a coastal town in Honduras. His mother and grandmother told him stories of how the landscape had changed and how much closer the water is to their home than it was when his mother was young. Vic was impacted by the understanding of how emissions from his home country, the United States, affected his family's community in Honduras.

Vic has used his own experiences to frame conversations about how climate change and environmental issues relate to other things such as race, class, immigration and war. He is a powerful speaker and organizer. He has given many speeches including to a crowd of at least 60,000 people at the NYC Climate Strike in 2019. He has also spoken to world leaders at the United Nations in 2015 (at the age of 15) and 2016.

Vic is one of the youth plaintiffs in a youth climate lawsuit against the United States. Their lawsuit claims that the governments' actions (and inactions) in regards to the environment violate the human rights of future generations and fail to protect essential public lands.

If you want to learn more, here is Vic's story written in his own words:

<https://www.ourclimatevoices.org/2019/vicbarrett>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8APYUL6ANMc>

Food for thought:

Vic and Isra have a number of intersecting identities they use to view and understand climate change and how it affects different people. What that means is there are different aspects of who they are that are each impacted differently by climate change. For example, Vic identifies as Hispanic, Black, transgender, and a first generation US citizen. Isra identifies as Black, female, Muslim and first generation US citizen. These are aspects of their identity that are marginalized in our society and experience social and environmental issues in different ways. Vic and Isra are able to share these experiences and observations with others who may not have considered these perspectives. As first-generation US citizens, Vic and Isra also have had the benefit of hearing stories from their parent's home countries and how communities there have been impacted by climate change.

During this pandemic, we have seen that people are impacted differently based on who they are as well as what their resources are. For example, a child in a family who has easy access to a computer and internet has had a different experience of learning from home than a child who does not have these resources. Families who are healthy have had different experiences than those who have family members who have health risks. Families who are able to stay at home have had different experiences than those who have had to continue to go to work outside of the home. Some people have lost their jobs or income and others have not. These are things that are not isolated experiences. A family can have a computer and internet, members with health risks, and someone who has a job that they have to leave the home for. Or any combination of these things. There are many different ways in which people have experienced this same pandemic.

Food Insecurity

(See Casey Davis, Executive Director, and Gabrielle Catton, Executive Assistant, at Edmonds Food Bank video

<https://www.communityalliesvbs.com/>)

Food insecurity is when a person does not have the consistent access to quality food needed for their bodies and minds to be fully active and healthy. Food insecurity occurs when an individual or a family makes so little money that they struggle to pay for basic human needs such as food and shelter (a condition called poverty). In the US, some common factors that lead to poverty are **unemployment, high housing cost, low wages, medical expenses, and low access to assistance**. Some groups are at higher risk of experiencing poverty than others due to systemic social issues such as racism, gender inequality, and climate change.

Food insecurity can lead to physical and mental health problems in both children and adults. In children, going hungry can interfere with their ability to grow and learn. Kids who are consistently not getting enough to eat may also exhibit more behavior problems than their peers.

654 students in the Edmonds School District are homeless.

7074 students in the Edmonds School District qualify for free and reduced lunch.

In 2018, 804,080 people in the state of Washington were food insecure.

In 2018, 11.1% of households in the U.S. experienced food insecurity at least some time during the year.

You can use this map to explore how areas in the United States and your own state are affected by food insecurity. <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

Today we heard from the Edmonds Food Bank and learned how they are helping people have access to food. As a VBS community, we are going to work together this week to see how much food we can collect to donate to our local food bank!

Donating to the food bank is an example of an act of charity. Charity is when you provide someone with something that they need right now, but that they can't get for themselves (like food). Often, a charity provides a service that the person will likely need again unless something changes in their situation. Charity is good because it helps people to get something that they really need right now to live, but it does not solve the problem of why they had this need in the first place. Charity doesn't address the root problem that causes the need.

So, we have to combine our acts of charity with work to change the problems that prevented people from meeting their own needs. It's called walking with two feet: charity (one foot) and change (the other). **What are things that need to change so that people who are experiencing food insecurity can be able to afford to buy enough food?** *Hint: see the bold text in the first paragraph above for some ideas.*

The idea of solving big problems can feel overwhelming, but the good news is that there are organizations out there that are working to change some of these big root causes of poverty. CARE and

The Hunger Project are examples of organizations that are working to address hunger and poverty globally. Here in the US, there are organizations such as the National Alliance to End Homelessness. We can also encourage our lawmakers to support laws that address hunger and poverty—in our neighborhoods and cities, our states, and in our nation as a whole.

CommUNITY Food Drive Challenge (Community in Action)



This week, you are learning about how to love others and walk alongside them as an ally. Today, you have learned about food insecurity, how hunger affects people, and how you can pair acts of charity with longer term solutions to address it. Donating to the food drive is one way you can put what you are learning into action!

Collect as many donation items as you can throughout the week to drop off at the location and times below! The items have varying point levels, based on cost and need. Aim for around 15 points for each family to help us reach our collective goal. We will track this throughout the week on the website and reveal the grand total at the end!

Individual family goal: 15 points

<u>1 point</u>	<u>2 points</u>	<u>3 points</u>
Canned corn	Mac and cheese	Fruit snacks
Pasta	Canned meat chili	Pasta sauce
Canned tomatoes	Canned tuna	Rice
Canned green beans	Canned chicken	Canned fruit

Drop off Location:

Edmonds United Methodist Church
828 Caspers St Edmonds, WA 98020

Drop off days/times:

Wed-Fri 9am-noon

***Join us for a Celebration Parade at EUMC Friday, 7/17/20 12pm-1pm! ***

This will be a socially-distanced event, either on foot or in vehicles, according to State and County safety guidelines in place at the time.

(If you are not local to Edmonds, please contact your own food bank to find out what items they need most.)

Day Two Activity- OBSTACLE COURSE



With adult supervision, use the space inside and/or outside your home to design an obstacle course. Use items you have around the house to create a path with obstacles to move through, under, over or around. You can work together with everyone in your family or household to create different types of challenges throughout the course. Other than that, there are no rules. Be creative! How you navigate the course is as big as your imagination. Will you walk, run, jump, crawl? Forward? Backward? On wheels!?

Take turns with your family members or friend group going through the course as many times as you want.

Follow up with the discussion questions below.

Discussion Questions

1. DID YOU HAVE FUN!? What was your favorite part?
2. In going through the course, what parts were challenging for you? What was easier? Was it different than you thought it would be before you did it?
3. Were certain parts easier for you, but harder for someone else? How does your perspective on the obstacle course differ from others?
4. What different methods did people use to get through the course? Did they all achieve the same goal (getting through the course)?
5. How did it feel to work together to create the obstacle course? How did you make decisions about what to include in it and how to move through it?

Notice how each person's perspective may be different in how they experience the same thing and in how they approach achieving the same goal. What is true for you may not be true for someone else, and each person has their own set of unique challenges and strengths. When trying to work together with others, sometimes there can be challenges we have to navigate, and there are different approaches we can take to achieve the same goal.

How can you put yourself in others shoes? How can you appreciate the differences?

Day Two Activity- CHARITY + SOCIAL JUSTICE (2 Feet) MEMORY GAME
(Found in Student Activity Pack)

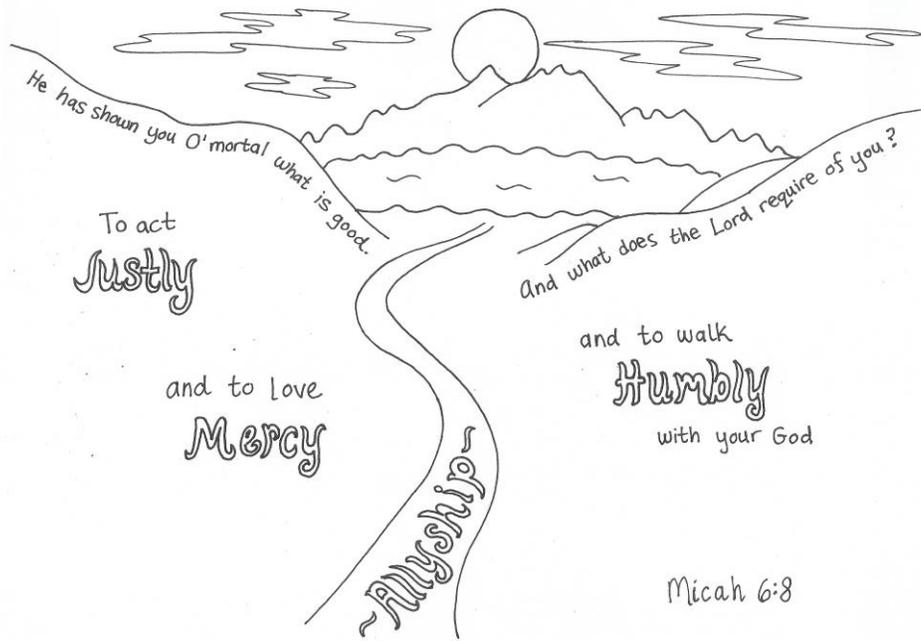
HOW TO PLAY!

1. Mix up the cards
2. Place them face down in rows
3. Pick 2 random cards and look at them
4. If they match, keep them. If they don't match, put them back.
5. Take turns turning the cards over 2 at a time until you have matched all of the pairs
6. Remember the color/picture and location of the cards you draw and pay attention during others turns
7. Read and talk about the charity and social justice pairs

Example of game pieces:

<p>HOMELESSNESS</p>  <p>Homeless care kit</p>	<p>HOMELESSNESS</p>  <p>Affordable housing</p>
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Day Two Coloring Sheet
(Full Sheet Found in Student Activity Pack)



Day Two Closing Discussion

Today we learned that God wants us to act with justice and mercy. We learned that justice means love in action and mercy means helping someone, or something, who is hurt or in danger. We read a book called *Something Happened in Our Town* that described an injustice. We explored the messages God was sending us about that injustice.

We learned about examples of people who are working for justice and mercy in their communities and around the world. People who work for justice and mercy on behalf of others are allies. We learned that Isra Hirsi and Vic Barrett are seeking justice by working to change environmental laws. They are allies to the Earth and those affected by climate change. We learned that Casey, and the Edmonds Food Bank, act with mercy to provide food to people in the community who cannot afford to buy it at the store. Casey, and the people who support the food bank are trying to act as allies to low income people in the community. We also began our community challenge to collect food for the Edmonds Food Bank. Our food bank challenge gives us an opportunity to work together as we act with mercy. We can also use this opportunity to practice how to be allies as well. We also learned that allies listen to the needs of the people they want to help before working to help them.

The 2 Feet – Charity vs. Social Justice Memory Game showed us that we need both justice and mercy together because mercy helps people who are suffering, and justice works to make changes so people stop getting hurt.

Our obstacle course activity showed us that seeing differences among people, and listening to the **perspectives** and **identities** (or stories) of others, helps us understand our different needs. If we understand our different needs, then we can act in a way that is just and merciful to all. I now invite you to go to the Padlet message board on our website to share an example of a problem you have seen or heard about and how we can respond to the problem with both justice and mercy.

[Discussion Board Day 2](#)

Remember, if you are participating in this program during the week of July 13-17, 2020 and you are in the Edmonds area, your food drive donation can be accepted Wednesday through Friday 9am-noon at the Edmonds United Methodist Church. If you are not in the Edmonds area, we encourage you to still participate in this community activity by donating to your local food bank. Please share your donation amounts with us—no matter which food bank you donate to—so that we can include you our community challenge event. If you are participating at another time, we still invite you donate to your local food bank.

Day Three

Sharing the World

Review scriptures:

1 Peter 3:8: “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.”

Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?”

Facilitator articles (read before starting the day’s activities with children):

5 ways your child can enjoy some benefits of diversity even if you live in a racially isolated community <https://www.embracerace.org/resources/5-ways-to-raise-more-inclusive-kids-if-you-live-in-a-segregated-neighborhood>

This is a long but worthwhile interview that builds off the above article on influencing children’s racial attitudes (summary and bullet points included): <https://www.embracerace.org/resources/can-we-really-raise-inclusive-kids-in-segregated-neighborhoods>

Day Three Theme Discussion and Story (video on website)

Hi CommUNITY Allies! Today is only day three of our CommUNITY Ally experience, and we have been learning so much already! We are going to start today by reviewing our previous Bible passages. Our first passage was 1 Peter 3:8. We also read the poem In Lak'Ech. Both the Bible verse, and the poem, teach us about seeing ourselves and the similarities we share with others.

Our second passage, Micah 6:8 tells us that God wants us to show justice and mercy toward others and we explored ways we can be just and merciful.

Today our goal is to learn about who, and what, we share the world with. We will start out by reading a book called *Last Stop on Market Street*, by Matt de la Pena and Illustrated Christian Robinson. In this book, the main character, CJ, begins to notice things in his environment and begins to discover who he shares the world with.

Reading of Last Stop on Market Street

Now that we have read the book, I invite you to work through today's activities. As you do, try to be like CJ and his nana by noticing who, and what, you share your world with.

Day Three Craft- Mandalas (Template Found in Student Activity Pack)

Mandala means circle in Sanskrit. This sacred art form can be used as a meditative way to symbolize the universe and our roles as a part of the universe. We will be thinking about balance, reflection and symmetry as we create our own circles using items gathered on your nature walk.

Materials:

Paper (or Optional: Print out of starting circle)

Pencils and/or pens for drawing (Optional: Ruler and/or plate or bowl to trace)

Paints, crayons or markers for adding color

Optional: Collected nature walk treasures, such as pebbles, flowers or leaves; glue or glue stick

Instructions:

1. If you're starting with blank paper, it is helpful to trace around a plate or bowl to get a starting circle. You can also use the mandala template either included in your to-go kit, or available as a PDF to download as well.
2. When we make mandalas, there is a LOT of flexibility. You will want to think about symmetry as you make your design—either across a line of reflection, or by turning and rotating the circle.
3. Starting with coloring the page and adding in your own design is one way to make a mandala. I started with colored pencils and markers.
4. If you collected items on your nature walk, you can make a pattern or design on top of your mandala too. Some items, like dried leaves or small pebbles, might be something you can glue on to your picture to keep long term. Some items, like fresh leaves or petals, might be better to just place on top temporarily. You can always take a photo of a temporary piece of artwork too!

Questions to Discuss or Think About:

1. Mandalas are originally from Asian cultures and can have sacred meanings in Buddhist traditions. When we participate in another cultural tradition, we have to be respectful and appreciative, rather than trying to own or change it. What have you appreciated from other cultures? Think about things like food, music and art, as well as values or stories you might have experienced.
2. Mandalas are symbolic objects with important meanings. What kinds of metaphors can you imagine for circles? You might think about the planet, about the ways that nature moves in cycles, or about the idea of balance.
3. The process of creating a mandala, or any artwork, can be meditative and calming. Sand mandalas are all about the process, as opposed to the end product. (Video) What are other ways that you can create beauty and calm?

Mandala Examples:



Day Three Role Models



Figure 9 Photo by Ambergris Today <https://www.ambergristoday.com/content/stories/2017/02/11/eleven-year-old-blogger-madison-edwards-snorkel-belize-barrier-reef>

Madison Edwards – Belize

At the age of 10, Madison Edwards learned about an oil company’s plans for exploration and oil extraction off the coast of her Country, Belize. This area is home to the Belize Barrier Reef. The Belize Barrier Reef is the second largest reef in the world. At the time, the reef was listed as a World Heritage Site in Danger. When Madison heard about the oil company’s plans, she began to educate herself on why coral reefs are important to the world. She then took that information and started a blog in order to educate her own community about the importance of protecting their coral reef. Her efforts were so successful that less than 2 years later, in December of 2017, the Belize government put a permanent moratorium on all resource extraction in Belize water. As of June 2018, the Belize Barrier Reef was removed from the list of World Heritage Sites in Danger—meaning that it is healthier and safer than it used to be. Madison continues to advocate for the environment. She believes in the importance of educating people about environmental issues in order to create changes in policy.

“ . . . My parents and generations behind me got to experience such a beautiful planet, and I want me and my generation to be able to do the same.”

This video is an acceptance speech for a World Wildlife Federation Award, but in most of it she talks about her story to save the reef.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=4rXDwiGoVC8&feature=emb_logo



Figure 10 Photo by Dogwood Alliance

Cole Rasenberger

In 2009, Cole Rasenberger's second grade teacher assigned a project to research an environmental issue that was important to them and then write to a politician about their concerns. Cole began to research an area that was close to his home, the Middle Atlantic Coastal Forest that runs primarily through North and South Carolina.

Cole learned that the forest was extremely rich in diversity, but was also at risk due to logging for paper mills, and that writing to a politician was not going to help him because much of the land in question was privately owned. He realized that writing to the paper mills would not make them change their practices because that was how they made their money. He did discover, however, that much of the paper made by these mills was going to fast food restaurants. So, he decided to lobby the fast food chains.

Cole started with McDonald's. He got his school principal's permission to involve the entire school in a writing campaign to get McDonald's to switch to post-consumer recycled material instead of new paper products. He was able to get 2,500 homemade postcards from students which he delivered to McDonald's. McDonald's listened. As a result of Cole's campaign, McDonald's changed their bags to 100% post-consumer recycled material.

Cole then turned his attention to KFC. Over the course of 12 months in 2010 and 2011, Cole organized seven (7) schools to sign over 6,000 postcards that would be delivered to KFC. He also took this time to speak to the media about the Middle Atlantic Coastal Forest and the need to protect it. He sent numerous correspondences to KFC in an attempt to set up a meeting to deliver the postcards. Eventually Cole, his sister and a few of his friends were invited to fly to Kentucky and meet with KFC executives. While the meeting was friendly, the executives did not seem inclined to change their practices. Cole left disappointed, but did not give up. He continued to campaign for change and to petition KFC. Eventually Dogwood Alliance and Greenpeace (two environmental advocacy groups) teamed up with him. In 2013, they were able to get KFC to agree to use more recycled paper, to stop

using endangered forests to source their paper products, and to not convert important North Carolina wetlands to tree plantations.

Video - Note that this was filmed prior to Cole teaming up with Dogwood Alliance and Greenpeace:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIQUcDt1dhE>

After you watch the video think about these questions:

- Sometimes people will think that your dreams about changing the world are too big. Sometimes adults will say that kids think things are simpler than they are. Why is it important to keep learning and taking action even when others are discouraged?
- KFC gave the kids \$5 at the end, and although it was a nice thing for KFC to do, did that gesture help create real change? What are some of the emotions the kids may have felt when they received the gift certificates?
- Activists don't always win every "campaign" to create change. Cole didn't win at first, and in some of the other stories we've read, it takes years before things get better. What would your next step be if you were in the position Cole was in at the end of the video? How would you make sure you and your friends didn't give up?

Food for thought:

The theme for today is "Sharing the World." Madison and Cole learned about the connection between themselves and their environment. We are not just connected to our environment; we are connected to each other as well.

We all belong to a variety of communities. A community can be defined in many ways. It can be a group of people who live in a shared space, or are part of the same institution (like a school), or who have a shared history, identity, or interest. They can be big, small, or anything in between.

The people in your house or your classroom are examples of small communities. Some big communities are all the citizens of a country, or people on a shared continent, all the way up to the global community (people of the world).

Identify a community that you are a part of. Who are the people in your community? How is this community a part of a bigger community? How is it connected to other communities?

To help you get started, here is an example of just a few of Edmonds United Methodist Church's (EUMC) community connections. EUMC is a Christian church community. Members of EUMC are connected with volunteers and clients of the Edmonds Food Bank, as well as families and staff of the Children's Center. These communities are connected through interactions and relationships developed due to shared space and overlapping community members. EUMC is also a part of the greater community of Edmonds due to being located in that city.

Day Three Activity- Exploring Nature

(Optional Recording Sheet Found in Student Activity Pack)

Madison and Cole learned about important ecosystems in their local environment and why they needed to take good care of them. An ecosystem is a community of living organisms and the natural world in which they inhabit, all of which are connected.

Today you are going to explore the world around you. Your goal is to see if you can notice things you haven't noticed before, consider how things in your environment are connected, and how you are connected to your environment as well. Your other goal is to just have fun! The more of your senses you use to observe the world around you (sight, touch, smell, hearing, taste—only for things that are safe to eat), the more you will discover!

Note to adults and older independent kids: You can approach this however you want. If you have one, take a magnifying glass outside along with a piece of paper and something to write or draw with (and on). You can use these to record your observations and draw some of the things you see. Alternatively, or in addition, you can take pictures to record some of your observations. Or, just take yourself outside with a curious mind, and sharp observational skills. You can go on a walk, or explore a yard, or a park. You can look over a large area, or sit still in a small area and see what all you can observe. These instructions and ideas for exploring are broad because you will all have access to different environments.

If you don't know where to start in exploring your environment, here are examples of things to look for and think about:

Close your eyes and be still for at least a couple minutes. What do you hear? What do you feel? Can you feel the air moving around you? The sun or rain? How might these things affect other things in your environment – plants, animals (including you), the land and any bodies of water that may be around you?

Water – is there a pond near you? Do you see anything swimming in it or any bugs near the surface? What's growing in and around it? If you are silent and still can you hear or see signs of frogs or any other animals? Take a clear cup and scoop up some pond water. What do you see in your cup?

If you have access to a stream or river make similar observations as above. Where is the water coming from? Where is it going? What plants and animals rely on this body of water? Think about all the ways you and your family use water throughout the day.

Are there any birds or other animals that you notice? What observations can you make? What are they interacting with (trees, dirt, plants, flowers, each other)?

Do you see trees? What can you observe about them? Look at their trunks, their bark, branches and leaves. How many different types of trees do you see? Are there any animals in the trees? Do you think any of them live there? What is your evidence?

Did you find a pine cone? Is it open or shut tight? Big or small? Can you find the spiral patterns in the cone?

Notice the plants. How many different types do you see? Observe some closely. Notice their structure. Look for details.

Examine leaves. Sometimes if you shine light into leaves you can see structures inside them that you didn't notice before. Look at the lines and patterns. Compare different types of leaves.

75% of plants need pollinators to reproduce. Think of what that means for us in terms of the food we eat and the air we breathe! Pollinators are animals and insects that help pollen made by plants get to eggs made by the same type of plants. Together the pollen plus the eggs produce the plant seeds. Pollinators include birds, bats, moths, flies, bees, beetles, and butterflies. How many pollinators can you find?

Bugs! What different types can you find? What do they look like? Do they fly or crawl? Are they alone or "in a herd"? Look on leaves and flowers, under rocks, in sidewalk cracks, or just get close to the ground and see what you can see.

Don't forget the ground. Find and compare different rocks. Explore the soil. Is it coarse (big particles like sand) or fine (small particles like flour)? Are there worms? Worms help keep the soil healthy. Did you know earthworms form herds? There is a lot to be curious and wonder about in our world.

This is a lot of observing. If you can't do it all that's okay. Again, your goal is to notice things you may not have noticed before, consider how the things you observed are connected and think about how you are also connected to the world around you. Oh, and have fun exploring!

Day Three Coloring Sheet

(Full Sheet Found in Student Activity Pack)

CommUNITY allies



coming together while apart

Day Three Closing Discussion

Today we learned about Madison Edwards and Cole Rasenberger. Both kids learned about their environment and the struggles it faced. Then, they both found ways they could team up with others to help solve the problem.

We created mandalas which represent an awareness of life. The circular shape of the mandala helps us understand our connectedness to each other.

We looked at our own environments to discover more about them. We explored the ecosystems in which we live by observing nature around us.

We learned about Madison and Cole who looked at their environments. They then learned more about their environments and the challenges the environments faced.

We invite you to go to the Padlet message board on our website to share a picture, drawing, or writing about who you share your world with. Your share can be about nature and/or about a community you are a part of. What is the community? What do you love about it? How is it connected to other communities? While you are there, look at the posts from others to see who they share the world with and notice if you share any connections with others.

[Discussion Board Day 3](#)

Remember, if you are participating in this program during the week of July 13-17, 2020 and you are in the Edmonds area, your food drive donation can be accepted Wednesday through Friday 9am-noon at the Edmonds United Methodist Church. If you are not in the Edmonds area, we encourage you to still participate in this community activity by donating to your local food bank. You can still share your donation amounts with us to be counted with our community challenge event. If you are participating at another time, we still invite you donate to your local food bank.

Day Four

CONNECTION

1 Corinthians 12:26: “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

Facilitator articles (read before starting the day’s activities with children):

7 ways to highlight resistance efforts when discussing oppression with children:

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/highlight-resistance-efforts>

Day Four Theme Discussion and Story (video on website)

Hi CommUNITY Allies! Today, we are going to be learning about connecting with others. We begin with a Bible passage from 1 Corinthians 12:26 (NIV) which says, "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it."

As we think about this passage, let's also think about what we have been talking about in our previous Today is about connection, community, empathy, and the seeing perspectives of ourselves and others. In this passage, God is telling us that if one person is suffering, then everyone suffers. An example of this is the way people of color are treated in the US. When someone is treated unfairly, hurt, or killed because of the color of their skin, it hurts our whole society. Maybe you have seen how people have been working together around the country to stand up for each other as allies recently. Another word for that is solidarity. Racism doesn't affect everyone in the same way, but we can all stand in solidarity with Black Lives Matter, or Native Sovereignty movements, for example.

And we can be in solidarity with environmental justice issues too. Think about an issue like climate change. Humans polluting the air causes the gases in the atmosphere to change. As the climate changes, places on earth get hotter and drier. As it gets hotter and drier, fires are more likely to burn the land. When fires burn, they destroy homes of people and animals alike. Fires also destroy food sources and people and animals can get seriously hurt, or be killed. Every action affects others because we are all connected.

God also tells us in this passage that if something good happens to one person, then it is good for everyone. When we seek justice and rights for one group of people, everyone benefits from that justice. When we take action to protect the environment, everything in that environment benefits. And just like we talked about that stormy feeling that happens inside us when we see injustice or experience it ourselves, when we work as allies or stand in solidarity, we can bring back that sunny feeling too.

We are going to read a book, titled *Say Something*, written and illustrated by Peter Reynolds. While we read this book, I want you to think about any connections it has to our Bible verse.

Today we are going to do some activities that will help us learn about the idea that our actions are connected and how, like in the book, *Say Something*, we can use our talents to speak up and make the world a better place.

Day Four Craft- Paper Chains (Template Found in Student Activity Pack)

Summary: Making paper chains is a simple activity. Maybe you've made them before to decorate your home for a party. For this craft, though, we are using paper chains to literally connect social justice issues together—and to connect ourselves and our communities too.

Materials:

Printable Paper Chains (4 pages with text; 1 blank)

Watercolor paints, crayons or markers for adding color

Scissors

Scotch tape or Stapler and staples

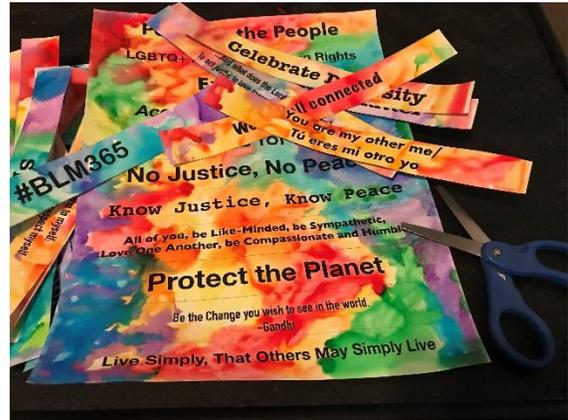
Instructions:

1. The first step is adding color to your paper chains. It is easier to do this before they are cut apart. If you are printing at home, you can use colored paper or cardstock to print, or you can print on plain paper and then color them in—your choice! If you'd like to use watercolors, printing on cardstock is suggested, and wait until the paper is fully dry before assembling your chain.
2. There is a blank set of paper chains for you to add in some of your own ideas. I added my name, as a reminder that I am connected to all these different values and ideas. I also added in one of my favorite quotes: I am in the world to change the world. You can add your name, the names of role models in your community, and/or different values or ideas that you care about too.
3. Cut the strips apart on the lines.
4. Assemble the chain by curling the strip into a circle and using a small piece of tape or a staple to secure the ends.
5. Connect each new circle to the one before it by threading it through the center then securing its ends.
6. Paper chains are light enough to hang on the wall with a couple of push pins or thumbtacks. Find a good place to display your chain of connections!

Questions to Discuss or Think About:

1. There are a lot of different values and social justice issues on the paper chain strips. Which issues do you understand well? Which ones do you have questions about?
2. Sometimes it is tempting to think that if a social justice issue does not directly affect me, I don't have to care about it. After all, if I'm not an immigrant, why should I care about immigrants' rights? Or if I'm not Black, why do I have to say Black Lives Matter? Why is it important to understand that we are all connected?

Paper Chain Examples:



Day Four Role Models



Figure 11 Photo by Frankie Fouganthin

Greta Thunberg

At the age of 8, Greta Thunberg (from Stockholm, Sweden) learned about climate change, its impacts on the planet and the projected outcomes if human practices didn't change. Greta could not understand why people weren't taking more action to address something so critical. Over the next few years, she became preoccupied with the subject to the point of becoming depressed. For a period of time she stopped eating and speaking. Greta was diagnosed with having Asperger Syndrome (a milder form of autism), Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, and selective mutism.

In 2018, at the age of 15, Greta won a climate change essay contest. Three months later she decided to take further action. Inspired by students of Majority Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida who walked out of school to demand action on gun violence, she decided that she would use this same tactic to demand action on climate change.

Greta sat alone on the steps of the Swedish parliament every day for 3 weeks holding a sign that read "School Strike for Climate." She demanded that Sweden meet the carbon emissions target that they had committed to in the Paris Agreement of 2015. She posted pictures of her one-person climate strike on social media and encouraged other youth to follow suit. Her call to action took off and inspired youth around the world to host their own climate strikes. These international-youth-led climate strikes became known as "Fridays for Future."

Greta became a sought-after public speaker on climate change. She has spoken out in media, met with world leaders, and addressed the United Nations Climate Change Conference in both 2018 and 2019. Her manner is very forthright. (She is straightforward and uses strong statements.) In part due to Greta's mobilization of youth around the world, the September 2019 UN Climate Change Conference was met with millions of people worldwide demonstrating to demand action on this issue.

Greta focuses her efforts on holding governments accountable. In particular she addresses how wealthier, predominantly white countries have contributed the most to climate change while economically poorer nations have been affected the most. She argues that for this reason, wealthy

countries have the biggest responsibility in limiting their own carbon emissions so that other nations have the opportunity to develop needed infrastructure.

Greta sees her Asperger as a superpower in her fight for climate action. Because of her Asperger she can sit for long periods to learn about her interests. It gives her a determined focus when it comes to this issue. She can accept nothing other than immediate meaningful action.

“We showed that we are united and that we, young people, are unstoppable.”

See Video at beginning of article: <https://time.com/collection-post/5584902/greta-thunberg-next-generation-leaders/>



Figure 12 Jerome Foster II/Archinect

Jerome Foster II

Jerome Foster, age 18, is a climate activist, voting rights advocate, and virtual reality developer from Washington D.C. He has helped to organize three out of the ten most attended climate marches in Washington D.C. At the age of 14 he founded his own virtual reality company, TAU VR. He has used this platform to code programs that allow people to experience firsthand the devastations of climate change and environmental destruction. Jerome believes that raising awareness through education is key to creating change. At the age of 15 he started the youth climate blog Climate Reporter with the goal of informing people about climate change and environmental issues. Jerome also believes in the power of creating change through voting. He is executive director of OneMillionUs, which is a youth advocacy organization that encourages youth to vote.

“One person, one vote is the great equalizer of humanity. My mission is to show that we have the power to create a more just democracy that represents all of us.”

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bz7yV3_AR7E

Food for thought:

Jerome used his skills as a programmer to develop a creative way in which people might “experience” the effects of environmental destruction themselves. He did this as a way to educate but also as a way to “provide as sense of empathy.” Greta’s Asperger Syndrome allows her to focus on what she is passionate about and gives her drive to take action. She uses this unique attribute to advocate for climate justice and inspire others to do the same. We all have unique attributes, skills, and talents. What are some of yours? How might you be able to use your unique gifts to make a difference in the lives of others?

Day Four Activity Jump for Joy CommUNITY Movement Challenge!



For those that are able, do as many jumps with a jump rope or jumping jacks as you can in a row. For those that are not able, you can modify by doing just the arm movement of the jumping jack. Do a few practice rounds to warm up and get used to the motion before you start counting jumps.

When you finish, record your final number of jumps and enter it into the website jump tracker so we can track our community progress and see the result of everyone's effort. Do your best and most of all have fun! Don't forget to take pictures or short video clips to upload on the website.

Individually, it may seem like we are only doing a small part, but when everyone does the best they can, the combined efforts go a long way. Let's see what the impact of all working together looks like!

What else could you imagine working on together as a community? Do you remember how some of our role models used letter writing as one way that many people's voices can work together to help make a difference?

Day Four Activity Rube Goldberg Machine

Reuben Goldberg (1883-1970) was a famous American cartoonist and engineer. He was well-known for his cartoons depicting complicated devices that were used to perform very simple tasks. These became known as Rube Goldberg Machine's.

An example of one of his cartoon machines is a mousetrap in which A) mouse lunges for picture of cheese B) goes through picture and lands on hot stove C) jumps from stove onto block of ice which happens to be on moving escalator D) escalator (not attached to anything) carries mouse and ice up E) at top, escalator drops mouse onto boxing glove attached to spring F) which knocks mouse into a basket G) which triggers a miniature rocket H) which launches the mouse to the moon!

This fun idea took hold and over the years it became incorporated into commercials, TV shows and movies as a bit of comic relief. People also began to participate in Rube Goldberg Machine contests and challenges.

Today we are going to have our own Rube Goldberg Machine challenge. Why? Well, our theme for the day is connection. A Rube Goldberg Machine is a chain reaction; a sequence of connected events where the actions of one step trigger a connected step which then triggers another connected step and so on. This can also be a metaphor for human connections and the impact that we can have on one another.

So, your challenge today, in a nod to the global pandemic we are experiencing as well as the environmental theme that has also run throughout our curriculum:

Use a minimum of 5 steps to knock an empty toilet paper roll into a recycle bin. (If you don't have an empty toilet paper roll feel free to find a different item to be recycled.)

Some common components of Rube Goldberg Machines are things like balls, tracks, pulleys, levers, and dominos. It's up to you how you approach it or if you use all these elements. If you need a little inspiration:

Examples of balls could be: balls, marbles, oranges, blueberries, tape roll (it rolls too) . . .

Examples of tracks could be: toy train or car tracks, book edges, curved cardboard, pipes, rails made by a pair of objects such as chopsticks or cooking utensils.

Examples of dominos could be: well, dominos, but also books, blocks, candy bars . . .

String and cups are one way that you can approach pulleys. While popsicle sticks or pencils are just a couple examples of potential levers.

I would encourage you to see what you can build, but if you are an artist at heart and are more inspired by what outlandish system you can dream of and illustrate then go ahead and draw a cartoon!

If you haven't done this before I would suggest you watch some videos because A) they might help you get started if you are stuck and B) they are so much fun! Just don't get sucked in. Remember to go build your project!

Here are some of my favorite examples of very simple ideas to help you get started:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgDF1tyoOvU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch/?v=OHwDf8njVfo>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=ICv5owYrW4w&feature=emb_logo

Here are a couple of my favorite complicated Rube Goldberg Machines (way beyond what we are going for, but super fun to watch)!

Pass the salt while social distancing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nORRgU8sGdE>

You might have seen this one before, but it's so much fun, who can resist watching it again:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qybUFnY7Y8w>

Day Four Closing Discussion

Today we explored multiple ways that actions are connected. We started with our Bible verse, **I Corinthians 12:26** (NIV), which says, “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

We read, *Say Something* that showed us how we can use our talents to help others. This is connected to our role models, Greta Thunberg and Jerome Foster II, and how they used their talents and skills to advocate for people and governments to take action against climate change. We asked you to think about your own talents and skills and how you might use them to help others.

We worked to complete a Rube Goldberg challenge which taught us how one action can cause another action.

We completed our community movement challenge in which we used our bodies to complete a collective goal. We also created paper chains to visualize how we are connected and how social justice issues are connected. It also helps us visualize how our words and actions are linked together. **Using our Padlet discussion board, share how many jumps you completed and/or how many links are in your paper chain. We will tally them together to see how much we completed together.**

The COVID 19 pandemic has created many challenges for people to be in connection with each other. What are some ways you have stayed connected or others during this time? What are some ways you have heard or seen other people staying connected? What about people who are not able to connect using technology? Can you think of other ways to safely connect with people in the community? What are some ways you could use your talents and skills to help others stay connected?

[Discussion Board Day 4](#)

Day Five

COMMUNITY IN ACTION

Review scriptures:

1 Peter 3:8: “Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.”

Micah 6:8: “He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

1 Corinthians 12:26: “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

Day Five Theme Discussion and Story (video on website)

Welcome to day 5, CommUNITY Allies! Today is our final day together and our theme is Community in Action! We are going to start our time together with a story called *A Church for All*, by Gayle E. Pitman, and illustrated by Laure Fournier and this book is being read with permission from Albert Whitman & Company. If you have heard this story before, that is great! This is a book worth reading many times! This book reminds us that we want to create spaces where everyone feels like they belong.

reading of A Church For All

(Page 12 refers to the person in the wheelchair as weak, but people who have disabilities are not necessarily weak. They just need different tools and supports than people without disabilities.)

We have been learning a lot during this experience about activism and people who work for justice on social and environmental issues. Today, we will take this one step further and become activists ourselves! That is why our theme today is Community in Action! As we do the activities for today, be thinking about what issues matter to you? Do you have ideas for how to fix them?

Day Five Role Models



Figure 13 Photo by Manuel Elias/The Associate Press <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-autumn-peltier-14-to-address-united-nations-about-water-climate/>

Autumn Peltier

Autumn (born September 2004) is a member of the Wiikemkoong First Nation. She lives on Manitoulin Island on Lake Huron in Ottawa, Canada. Autumn has had access to clean drinking water all her life, but at a young age she learned that there are many in the world who do not, including many indigenous communities in Canada.

At the age of 8 Autumn was attending a ceremony at the Serpent River Reservation in Canada when she saw a sign that warned that the water was “toxic” and should not be consumed. This upset Autumn and she chose to take action. In doing so, she was also honoring her great-aunt’s work of advocating for water rights. Her great-aunt, Josephine Mandamin, in addition to being a vocal advocate, walked the shoreline of all five Great Lakes in her effort to raise water awareness.

In 2016, during a First Nation’s annual winter meeting, Autumn was chosen to present Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with a copper water bowl. This bowl was meant to symbolize his responsibility to protect the country’s water. Autumn caught the world’s attention when she took this opportunity to express her frustration about policies the prime minister had supported that were adversely affecting the drinking water of up to 100 First Nations. While she did not have time to deliver her prepared speech, she did have time to say, “I am very unhappy with the choices you’ve made.”

Autumn continued to speak out about the need to ensure that all people have access to clean drinking water. Her work has encouraged others to take action and has gained the attention of world leaders. She has spoken at the United Nations twice; first at the UN General Assembly in 2018 and then in 2019 at the UN Global Landscape forum which focuses on land sustainability. In 2019 Autumn was named the chief water commissioner by the Anishinabek Nation, an honor also held by her great-aunt.

“I’ve said it once, and I’ll say it again: we can’t eat money or drink oil.”

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EodBINYV7A>



Figure 14 Photo by Response Magazine

Jerrell Davis

Jerrell Davis is an educator, mentor, poet, emcee, hip hop artist, coach and activist. He has a passion for empowering youth and giving back to his community. In 2016, Jerrell co-founded Washington Building Leaders of Change (WA-BLOC). WA-BLOC partners with public schools in its community of SE Seattle, particularly Rainier Beach High School and Emerson Elementary School. WA-BLOC's relationships and programs encourage youth in academic achievement, civic engagement and racial equity through a culturally responsive lens, particularly within their local community.

WA-BLOC youth, with the support of mentors such as Jerrell, led a multigenerational campaign to provide free ORCA transit cards to low-income youth in Seattle Public Schools. This occurred after Seattle Public Schools changed their transportation policy to extend the radius in which families must provide their own transportation to and from school to two miles. Students learned how this new policy was adversely affecting low-income students in regards to punctuality, attendance and grades. Student leaders planned a march from Seattle Public School headquarters to City Hall. They also led and presented at a town hall on transit justice. Eventually, this led to a meeting with the Seattle School Board and other district leaders. Six months after the initial march, the school board unanimously voted to provide their low-income students with free ORCA cards.

Jerrell was named one of Seattle's Most Influential People of 2018 by Seattle Magazine. He leads by encouraging youth to embrace their self-worth and power and develop their own leadership skills.

"I love the imagination of children; I would rather work with young people any day."

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=qV9WexE8MWI&feature=emb_logo

Food for thought: Autumn recognized a problem in her own community that she has been fighting to change. She has also used her understanding of the issue to advocate for rights to clean drinking water globally. Jerrell uses his talents and passion to give back to and uplift his local community. Sometimes making changes on a big scale, like changing national or international policies, can seem overwhelming. But making changes at a local level can also have a big impact on local communities—and local changes also have the potential to snowball into affecting changes on a larger scale, too.

Do you have stories of people making a difference in your community during Covid-19? It could be something that helped a lot of people like food banks and schools getting food to families. It could also be small acts of kindness that made a difference.

Activist research – What would you do?

This week we have seen examples of youth (and even a couple adults ;)) who are working to make a positive change in the world. What are you passionate about? Today your challenge is to think about an issue that is important to you. It might be something broad that is affecting the whole world (like climate change), or maybe it's something very specific to your own community, like a problem at your school or in your neighborhood. Identify that issue, learn about it, and consider how you can use your special talents to affect change.

Remember to think about these questions when looking at tackling an issue. It will help you better understand what the problem is and how you might address it.

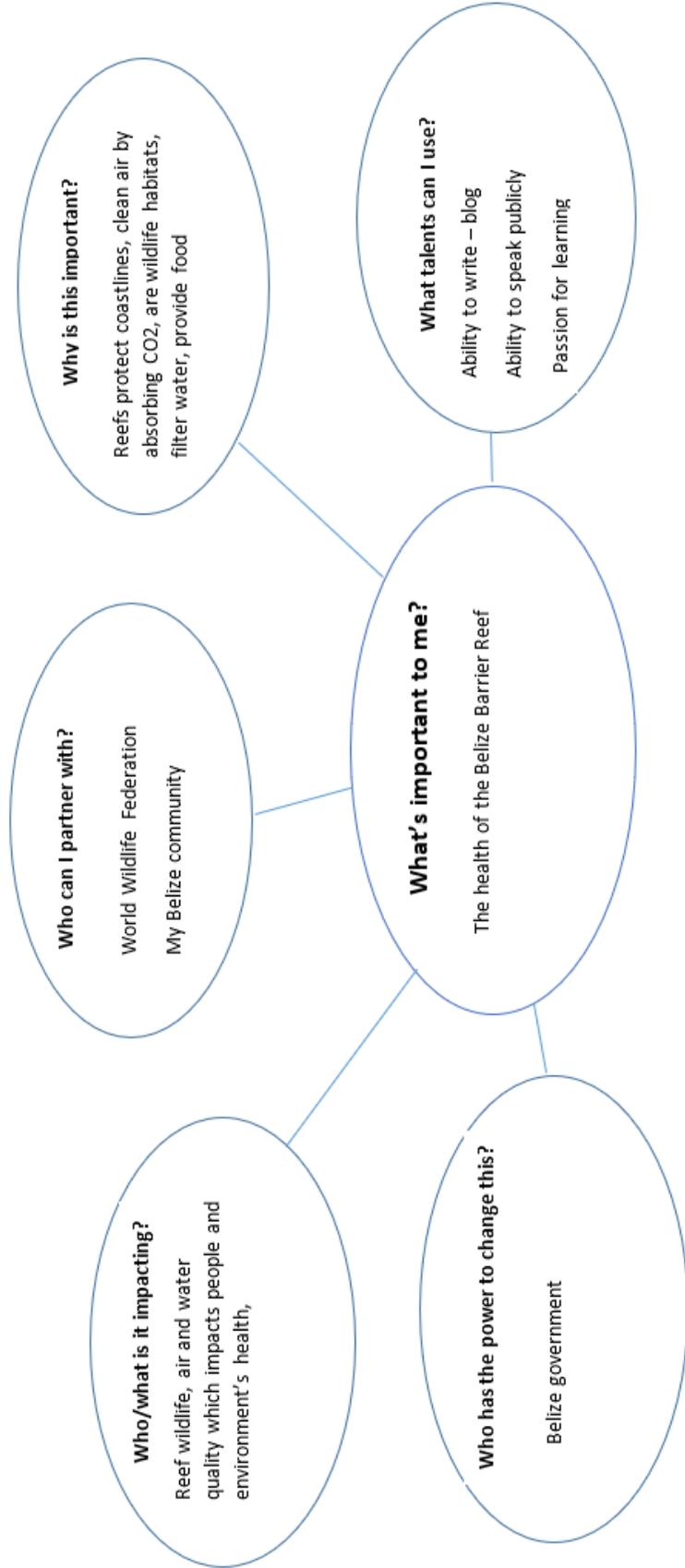
1. What is the issue and why is it important to address?
2. Who/what is it impacting? Is this something that is directly impacting you or is it an injustice that is not affecting you, but is impacting others. If the answer is the latter, then you are an ally. Refer back to the sheet on allyship.
3. Are there groups or organizations that are already working on this who you can partner with? If not, are there other individuals who are interested in this issue as well?
4. Is this an act of charity that is connected to a bigger social issue that requires change? If so, how can you support both?
5. Who has the power in this situation? In other words, who do you need to talk to in order to bring about change?
6. What are your talents? How can you use your talents to make a positive difference?

One more note: When we look at solving a problem, we need to make sure that we are not just doing our research on the problem, but that we are also thinking critically about our solutions and their greater impact. Remember to consider different voices and perspectives so you can come up with responsible solutions. That's part of being in community!

You may use the Activist Bubble Brainstorming sheet in the Student Activity Pack to help you organize your research. There is an example of the Activist Bubble Brainstorming sheet on the next page that was completed based on Madison Edward's story.

Example using Madison Edwards' story

My activist bubble brainstorm!



Allyship

To be an ally means to stand up *alongside* a group who is being treated unfairly (other words for this are being discriminated against, or oppressed) even though you are not part of that group. The first thing an ally does is listen to and learn from those who are receiving unfair treatment. Allies can be helpers in many different ways—and they play an important role, even though they are not the leaders of a movement!

Why is it important to understand your role as an ally?

An ally doesn't have the same personal experience or lived perspective to fully understand and know the situation. When we try to act, but do not fully understand, we are likely to make mistakes, cause more harm, and damage relationships.

Secondly, allies have to trust that other people are the experts in their own lives and experiences, and that they know what support they want or need. It is not our job to exert our power over a group by thinking that we know what's best for them, or that they need us to lead—we are here to support and help.

Why is it important to be an ally?

Because an ally is not a target of oppression, they have that as an advantage. It is often easier to speak up as an ally in the moment because there is more emotional and physical distance from the harm occurring.

Allies can also be particularly effective at helping change the hearts and minds of people who are acting harmfully, since people are often more receptive to hearing from members of their own identity group or social group. For example, if you saw your friend hurt someone else, you might be able to get your friend to understand the harm she caused, and get her to repair that harm more easily than the person she hurt.

Allies have been important for every social justice movement throughout history—there have always been people willing to stand in solidarity with others and fight against oppression.

Review In Lak'Ech and our Bible verses for the week. What did we learn about how we are to be in community with one another? How does being an ally align with these teachings? What would the world look like if we chose to ignore these teachings? What would the world look like if we carried out these calls to love one another, be compassionate, humble and act justly?

One more note on allyship: What happens when we make a mistake? None of us are perfect, so while it's important to try our best, at some point we will probably get it wrong. As allies, when we make mistakes, we do what we should always do when we hurt someone: We apologize sincerely, and we listen and learn so that we understand what we did wrong. Making mistakes feels uncomfortable, but they happen when we learn and act! (And not acting—so that we never make mistakes—is a worse option!) Whatever you do, don't give up! Your support is important! This is what you do when you are part of a community!

Day Five Closing Discussion

We have spent a lot of time learning about problems in the world and how people are working to solve those problems. All of the people we learned about imagined something better for themselves, for their community, and for the world. Today is a call to action. We want you to imagine the most beautiful version of the world you can imagine. What would it look like? What would it feel like? It does not matter if your vision seems impossible to you, or to others. Every person who has ever changed anything about themselves, their life, the community, or the world, first started with imagining that things could be better. Once they imagined something better, it made it possible. Once we create an image in our hearts, our minds can start thinking about ways to make it happen.

So, start by thinking of your vision for something better. Then, begin to think about how your vision can become reality. This might be where you begin to research an issue of your own.

We would love for you to share your vision with us. You can do this by creating a video, drawing a picture, or writing about your vision. You may then add your vision to our [Discussion Board Day 5](#) AND email it to us at info@communityalliesVBS.com so we can share our visions with others.

We would also love to see your completed coloring pages. Please share them on our Padlet page as well!