

# ***Growing Anti-racist UU's: A Curriculum for Children***

[www.uucharlottesville.org/anti-racist-curriculum/](http://www.uucharlottesville.org/anti-racist-curriculum/)

## **Civil Rights Movement and Personal Action for Justice**

### **Lesson 6A for Grades 3-5**

by Linda Dukes

#### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It is important for all American children to know about the Civil Rights Movement for African Americans and about the work to end segregation of Mexican American children in California. They also need to be prepared to take action for justice when they notice something that is unfair.

#### **Thought to Ponder:**

What's the problem with being "not racist"? It is a claim that signifies neutrality: "I am not a racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism." But there is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of "racist" isn't "not racist." It is "antiracist." What's the difference? One endorses either the idea of a racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an antiracist. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an antiracist. One either allows racial inequalities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist."

--Kendi, Ibram X. *How to be an Antiracist*. One World: New York, 2019. Print. p. 9

#### **GOAL**

- To develop skills in acting for fairness (being an antiracist)

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Participants will:

- Learn about school segregation for Latinx children
- To develop skills in speaking up for fairness as anti-racist Unitarian Universalists

#### **LESSON-AT-A-GLANCE**

Opening	7
Activity 1: Reading book, <i>Separate is Never Equal</i>	20
Activity 2: Practicing taking action	20
Closing	5

## LEADER PREPARATION

When previewing the book before class, please note places to stop to engage the children with questions about how the characters are feeling, what might happen next, or what the listeners think about the scenario (see Activity 1). This process really helps to keep children engaged. Also, please note vocabulary words that some children in your group might not know. If the words aren't central to understand the story, consider simply changing them for simpler words as you read. For example, if the story mentions a "vessel," you could simply say "ship."

## MATERIALS FOR LESSON

- Duncan Tonatiuh. *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*. NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2014. Print.  
**Prepare to shorten the story by summarizing some of the pages.**
- Map of North America
- Scenarios for Activity 2
- Copies of "Taking it Home" and "For Ibram Kendi, being 'not racist' doesn't cut it. He insists that we, and he, be 'antiracist.'" for all participants (and plans to email them to the families).
- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle or matches and candle

## LESSON PLAN

### OPENING (7 MINUTES)

#### Description of Activity

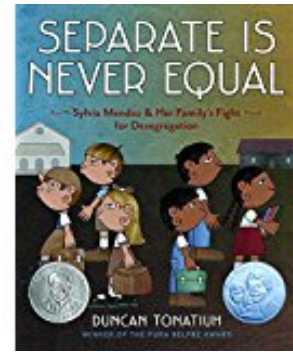
Sit in a circle and follow the class's usual opening procedures (check in, chalice lighting, listen to chime until silence for centering, opening words, etc.).

**Suggested Chalice Lighting Words** (if class is not routinely using another reading):

We light this chalice, symbol of our faith,  
as a reminder to respect each and every person and  
to let Love guide us in our lives.

Share Joys and Concerns.

## ACTIVITY 1: STORY *SEPARATE IS NEVER EQUAL: SYLVIA MENDEZ & HER FAMILY'S FIGHT FOR DESEGREGATION* BY DUNCAN TONATIUH – 20 MINUTES



### Description of Activity

- Say that this is a true story.
- Geography Connection: Find Mexico and California on a map with the students. Point out where they are in relation to their home state.
- **Note: This book is too long to read straight through. See below for ways to summarize parts of it. Also simplify vocabulary, as needed. Children need to be engaged as you go along.** Read/tell the story, stopping at appropriate spots to **empathize with individuals**. For example, after reading p. 5, ask how do they think the family is feeling?  
After p. 10, ask how do you think Sylvia feels? What about her cousins?  
After p. 15, ask how Sylvia and her brothers feel at this Mexican school? Etc.  
**Summarize** a few of the pages to move along more quickly. (It helps to make sticky notes on these places in the book.)  
For example,  
On p. 16, you could read the first sentence and skip the rest of the page.  
On p. 18, you could say, “Mr. Mendez heard about a lawyer who helped to integrate the public pools in a nearby city.” Then read the last sentence on the page.  
Pages 20-21, you might just read the first sentence on each page.  
Pages 26-27, you could skip the last paragraph of p. 26 and all of p. 27.  
Page 28, you could read only the first paragraph.  
Page 32, you could skip the first paragraph.
- Discuss book by asking questions such as,  
What did you learn?  
Why is it unfair to make people with different skin shades go to different schools?  
What actions did it take to get the law changed?  
What other true stories does this remind you of?

## ACTIVITY 2: PRACTICING TAKING ACTION, 20 MINUTES

### Preparation for Activity

- Read over suggested scenarios to decide which are most appropriate for your class. Revise them or add new ones, as appropriate.
- Make a note to let the teacher of the next lesson know if you don't think the children had enough time to practice with role plays today. Perhaps more practice could be added to the next lesson.

### Description of Activity

Discussion: Why do you think we have learned about unfair things that white people have done to black and brown people in our history?

What does this have to do with today? (Not simply to learn so we don't repeat history but also that unfair things are still happening today.)

We do not operate in on a fair playing field even today. It's like whites still have the wind on their side when they throw a ball. Many white people think blacks and whites are treated fairly and equally today but that is not actually true. Racism is still real.

It's up to each of us as UUs to work for justice – our world, community, school, classmates, teachers etc. are not always fair -- so we need to practice how to speak out. It's not easy but it's important. Doing this is acting in an **anti-racist** way. "Anti" means "against," so what does "anti-racist" mean?

(Show the word "racist" first, then it covered with a red circle with a line through it.)

Try to get kids to come up with examples or to suggest alternate things to say. Write them on flip chart paper. Pause after each scene and ask them if they heard one idea that *they* think they would feel OK saying. If some children don't seem comfortable participating, you might need to discern if they are shy, don't know what to say, and/or are uncomfortable in these role-plays and coach them as needed. It may help to connect this lesson to anti-bullying programs they may have in their schools.

We'll start with one example that we've prepared and then we'll ask you to think of some examples that you've heard.

*(Note: teachers should play the roles of the people making the negative comments and kids of color should not be asked to play the roles of the kids of color in the scenes.)*

#### Situation 1, **Exclusion:**

Two white kids are playing on the school playground and a black kid comes up to them asking to join in. One of the white kids says "We don't want you to play with us—our moms told us not to play with black kids." Another white kid (the "witness") is nearby and hears this.

What could the witness say? (examples, "That's not right." "Would you like to play with me? . . .")

What could the black kid say? (examples, "It's not fair to shut people out like that – everybody's important." "We are all different from each other in some ways – what makes you think skin color is so important?")

Discuss this scene. Hopefully come up with something that each person feels s/he could say.

Ask for other scenes that they've actually heard.

If they don't come up with any, use some of these.

#### Situation 2, **Namecalling:**

On the playground at school, white kids tease an Japanese-American kid saying, "Your eyes are funny."

What could the Japanese-American kids say? (Examples, "I got them from my parents [or mother or father] and I'm proud of them.")

What could witnesses say? (Examples, "My parents taught me not to make fun of differences in the way people look." or "I believe eyes are a gift from God." or "I like variety in the way people look. It would be boring if we all looked the same.")

Other name-calling scenes might include "You're fat." or "You smell bad."

### Situation 3, **Stealing:**

The classroom teacher says some money is missing from her desk and asks that whoever took it put it back before the end of the day.

At lunch, one kid says to people sitting nearby, “Brittany must have taken it. Her family doesn’t have any money.”

What could a witness say? (Example, “Just because she’s poor, you think she steals things? That’s not fair.”)

If you don’t think the children had enough time to practice how they could respond, consider doing some role plays in the next session.

## **CLOSING (5 MINUTES)**

### **Description of Activity**

Gather children in a circle. Say,

Today we practiced how we can take action for fairness, to work to be anti-racist Unitarian Universalists. What ideas for action fit for you? Are you ready?

What Unitarian Universalist principles are we acting on?

(Close with class’ routine procedures.)

Hand out Take it Home sheets as parents/caregivers arrive.

## **LEADER REFLECTION AND PLANNING**

When class ends, please stop for a minute with your co-teacher to . . .

- Take a deep breath together and acknowledge that you have done one thing today for racial justice. Sometimes the problems seem so huge that we need to find specific actions we can take, and this is one of them.
- Discuss if any children weren’t fully included in the lesson and how they might be in the future.
- Note any issues that you want to follow up on in the next class.
- Note any issues that you want to mention to your congregation’s racial justice curriculum planners or your religious educator.

## **TAKING IT HOME**

*(see Handout 1)*

## Take It Home! (for 6<sup>th</sup> Racial Justice Lesson)

In our classes we learned how people have worked for justice in the past and practiced ways we can act in anti-racist ways to insist on justice.

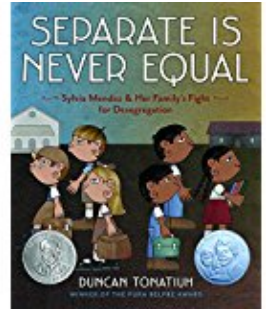
Teaching Tolerance’s Social Justice Standards include . . .

- I know about the actions of people and groups who have worked throughout history to bring more justice and fairness to the world.
- I know it’s important for me to insist on justice for myself and for others, and I know how to get help if I need ideas on how to do this.

(<http://www.tolerance.org/anti-bias-framework>; click on the link near the bottom).

The class heard the story *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh. In the late 1940s the Mendez family organized and won a legal case in Orange County, CA, which ruled that the existing practice of having separate schools for “Mexicans” was illegal.

The children practiced taking action for justice in various practical scenarios.



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### FOUR CORE GOALS OF ANTI-BIAS EDUCATION

From Louise Derman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards, 2010. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves*

1. Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
  2. Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
  3. Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
  4. Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and/or discrimination.
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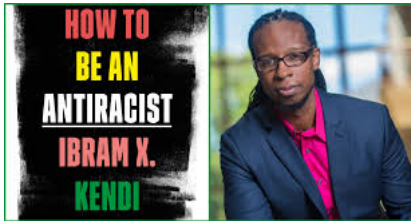
## For Ibram Kendi, being ‘not racist’ doesn’t cut it.

### He insists that we, and he, be ‘antiracist.’

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2019/08/23/ibram-kendi-being-not-racist-doesnt-cut-it-he-insists-that-we-he-be-antiracist/>

By Vanessa Williams, August 23, 2019



About US is an initiative by The Washington Post to explore issues of identity in the United States.

Ibram X. Kendi is the author of “How to Be an Antiracist.”

In the current debate over race, people are quick to defend themselves by declaring that they are “not racist.”

That’s not good enough for historian Ibram X. Kendi, who argues that the phrase has little meaning. After all, even white nationalists such as Richard Spencer and David Duke, the former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, insist that they are not racist.

The goal for those who believe in equal opportunity and justice should be to be “antiracist,” says Kendi, who has written a new book to help guide the way.

“*How to Be an Antiracist*,” which came out last week, is a follow-up to Kendi’s 2016 bestseller, “*Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*.” Kendi, 37, is a professor and the director of the Antiracist Research and Policy Center at American University.

In “*Stamped from the Beginning*,” which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction, Kendi challenges the widely held belief that racism is the product of ignorance or hatred. Instead, he argues, people in power enact policies to further their financial or political goals, then create racist ideas to justify them. For example, whites in need of free labor to build their empires declared that Africans were inferior and fed the idea to the masses to defend slavery.

In his new book, Kendi argues that it’s not enough to say you’re not a racist. “What’s the problem with being ‘not racist?’ ” Kendi writes in the introduction. “It is a claim that signifies neutrality: ‘I am not a racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism.’ ”

He adds: “One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an antiracist.”

Kendi is just as hard on himself in the book, sharing his own conversion from a middle-class teenager who believed black people trapped in struggling communities had only themselves to blame to a scholar who now believes, as he writes, that “internalized racism is the real Black on Black crime.”

He also talks about the period of his life when he engaged in “anti-white racism,” before he learned to “discern the difference between racist power (racist policymakers) and White people.”

“I used to be racist most of the time,” he writes. “I am changing.”

Kendi talked with About US on what he hopes people take from his work. This interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

**“*Stamped from the Beginning*” was quite a thorough examination of racism in America. What do we learn in the new book?**

“Stamped” was largely a history of racist and antiracist ideas, and from what people told me, it really did not give them a very clear path forward as to how they as individuals can strive to change themselves and change society to be antiracist. So the more I spoke about “Stamped from the Beginning,” and the more I urged people to express antiracist ideas, the more people were like, “Tell me more about being an antiracist. I’ve only been taught to be not racist.” The more people asked me how to be antiracist, the more I felt I needed to write a book that systematically walked people through that.

When we think about the term “not racist,” that really stems from the statement “I am not racist,” which people say when charged with being racist. Everyone says, “I’m not a racist,” no matter what racist idea they’ve said, no matter what racist policy they support. “I’m not a racist” is a term of denial; it doesn’t have any other meaning. The term “antiracist” has a very clear meaning. It’s someone who has expressed ideas of racial equality or supports antiracist policy that leads to racial equity.

**The book is part memoir, because you talk about the work you did and continue to do, on yourself to become antiracist. Why did you decide to open up?**

I thought that it would help people if they saw me constantly critiquing myself and looking in the mirror. If I opened up, it would open them up to essentially do the same thing to themselves and for themselves. I didn’t want to lecture down to anyone as much as I wanted to explain what I have sought to do and hope that it could serve as a model for other people.

**Talk about how black people have absorbed anti-black racist ideas and why you call internalized racism “the real Black on Black crime.”**

Black people have power. I have power, and every single black person on earth has the power to resist [racist ideas], but they don’t resist because they think the problem is black people. I think that you also have black people who are in positions of power who use their power to support policies that reproduce racial inequity. Do black people have



the same amount of power as white people? Of course not, and it's not even close. But to suggest black people don't have the power to resist believing something is wrong with black people is also to live an alternative reality.

**Often people think that racism is about personal relationships, attitudes, behaviors, rather than structures, institutions that perpetuate racism. Where is the call for structural, institutional change in the book, whose title suggests it's about converting people one by one?**

For me, what I realized in researching racist ideas was that the effects of racist ideas on people is that it causes them to see people as the problem. It causes them to see black people as the problem. It does not cause them to see the structures and systems and power and policy as the fundamental problem. An antiracist — someone who really strives to be antiracist and essentially frees themselves of racist ideas — then realizes that the fundamental problem isn't people, it's power and policy. And then, of course, they become a part of the movement to dismantle those racist policies and racist policymakers, and that's ultimately the goal for the individual. You're either going to, as an individual, continue to reinforce the notion that something is wrong with a particular racial group and allow those policies and power and structures to stay in place or be part of a force to dismantle those policies and powers and structures.



A man holds up a anti-racism sign during a rally against racism and white nationalism Aug. 6 in Washington. (Jacquelyn Martin/AP)

**You're a former journalist. How do you think journalism as an institution has helped or hindered society grapple with racism?**

It's been a mixed bag. When journalists have hindered the struggle against racism, one of the ways they've done so has simply been to be unwilling to use the r-word. There's a term, "racism" and "racist" — they're in the dictionary. The job of journalists is to use words appropriately based on their definition. Words give us the ability to formulate reality, and if the reality is that something is racist, it's absolutely critical for journalist to call that reality racist, and when they choose not to and use some other term, like "racially insensitive," they are not doing their jobs of documenting and reporting reality.

**President Trump's rhetoric and policies seem to have forced the country to address racism in a way that didn't happen during the tenure of the nation's first black president. Is this helpful or healthy, the way the conversation is happening, which often seems to be in response to his outbursts?**

I do think that whenever we're talking about racism, it's a good thing. Because at least we're talking about it and not acting as if it doesn't exist. I do think we could talk about it in a better way. We can be consistently defining what a racist is, what racism is and changing our conversations on those definitions. Instead of people saying, "I'm not racist because I'm not like Donald Trump," people can ask themselves, "How, actually, do I share ideas with Donald Trump? Maybe I need to give up those ideas because I'm really opposed to him." Or it may be that people are taking the charges against President Trump personally. In other words, when people call Trump racist, it's like calling them racist, so of course they're going to defend him by saying, "He's not racist." In defending him, they're defending themselves because they share his ideas.

### **Are those people reachable?**

I think they are reachable. I think the way we reach those people is to build relationships with them, such that they can feel comfortable being self-critical and vulnerable, and simultaneously, we figure out what is harming them and ailing them and stressing them. Chances are they have explained the source of that stress as, let's say, people of color. When we can prove to them that Trump or someone else they support is actually the very source of what is stressing them out, then we can prove to them that they have been misled to believe the source is people of color.

### **Are you hopeful that we can have an antiracist country?**

I don't think we have any reason to be hopeful, but at the same time, I know that in order to bring about an antiracist America, we have to believe that it is possible. In order to bring about change, we have to believe that change can come. Philosophically, I know that, and philosophically that gives me hope.

What I want people to take away [from the book] is that, first and foremost, all of us can and should be striving to be antiracist, because ultimately we have to be able to create a better nation for ourselves and our children, who won't be able to be manipulated by racists who have the power to create policies that harm us. Only antiracists truly have the power to heal the country of its racism. I'm encouraging people to self-reflect and self-critique and to grow, like I am continuing to do.

# Racism

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## Anti-racism