

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

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

## **Action - Lesson 6B for Grades 3-5**

by Linda Dukes

### **LESSON OVERVIEW**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

##### **Thoughts to Ponder:**

What does it look like to put Unitarian Universalist beliefs about justice into action?

##### **Big Question:**

If we really believe in justice, what can we do to change the many worlds we live in, most of which value White people above people of color?

#### **GOALS**

- To realize the importance of speaking out for justice – in the past and now
- To practice making protest signs for racial justice

#### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Participants will:

- Hear story about a Unitarian worker for justice in the past
- Practice ways to speak for justice

#### **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

- Group juggling game is from Lodestone curriculum by Katie Covey, which she used from Dale LeFevre, author of New Games
- Take It Home articles are from [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/preserving-my-childrens-innocence-is-an-act-of-preserving\\_us\\_57d2d8f4e4b0273330ac3dae](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/preserving-my-childrens-innocence-is-an-act-of-preserving_us_57d2d8f4e4b0273330ac3dae)

And <https://psychologybenefits.org/2017/08/30/encouraging-black-childrens-self-expression/>

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

Opening	5 minutes
Activity 1: Group juggling	5 minutes
Activity 2: Telling story	12 minutes
Activity 3: Making signs	18 minutes
Closing	7 minutes

## LEADER PREPARATION

Read article “Preserving My Children’s Innocence Is An Act Of Preserving White Supremacy.”

Practice telling story about Maria Weston Chapman, so you don’t have to read it.

## MATERIALS FOR LESSON

- 4 soft objects to toss (such as small bean bags)
- Copies of Take It Home and articles, “Preserving My Children’s Innocence Is An Act Of Preserving White Supremacy” and “Black Pain, Black Joy, and Racist Fear: Supporting Black Children in a Hostile World” for parents/caregivers and plan to email them to families after class
- samples of racial justice signs
- paper/posterboard and thick markers for making protest signs
- Sanders, Rob. *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights*. Illustrated by Jared Andrew Schorr. NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2018. Print.
- Chalice and LED/battery-operated candle or matches and candle

## LESSON PLAN

### WELCOMING AND ENTERING

#### OPENING (5 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: GROUP JUGGLING – 5 MINUTES

##### Description of Activity

Extinguish chalice if it’s a real flame

Stand in circle.

Say: Working for justice/fairness takes all of us. There is a lot to do and we all can play our parts. When we “drop the ball” we need to simply start again.

Play Group Juggling (from Lodestone Curriculum):

... We stand in a circle, facing the center, with our hands raised in the air.

Starting with one ball [or use bean bags so they don't roll away when dropped], we catch it and throw it, establishing a pattern. One of us tosses the ball to someone on the other side of the circle, say, and she tosses it to a third person who tosses it to a fourth and so on, until everyone has caught the ball once. (We each drop our hands when we've had a turn.) As group members enter, they are added to the circle.

The last catcher tosses the ball back to the player who started the pattern, and we all run through the sequence again, for practice. Now the juggling can begin. With one ball on its way around the circle, we add another, so that we have two balls in the air following the catch-and-toss pattern. Now we add another ball, and by this time we should be watching carefully for midair collisions, trying to toss the ball so that the intended receiver can catch it, and perhaps calling out the names of the receivers as we toss the ball to them.

We should remember that this is a cooperative venture: We want to keep as many balls in the air as we can, but if one drops, we should just pick it up and keep the pattern going.

—from Dale LeFevre, author of *New Games*.

## **ACTIVITY 2: TELL STORY OF MARIA WESTON CHAPMAN – 12 MINUTES**

### **Description of Activity**

**Tell** (don't read) story of a Unitarian anti-slavery activist, Maria Weston Chapman. She was a white woman who lived in Massachusetts in the 1800s. She married a rich merchant who was a member of Dr. Channing's Unitarian Church in Boston and started getting involved in abolitionist groups through her husband. (explain abolitionist). At first people thought she was just a rich white woman who was just doing this for show. But when she got to work, that idea changed!

In 1834, with three of her sisters and eight other women Maria Chapman founded the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. They believed that slavery was against the laws of God and caused a huge amount of suffering. They called for setting slaves free immediately.

Once an angry crowd gathered outside their meeting place, but they calmly began their meeting with a reading and prayer. . Maria said that if this was the last place of freedom, "we may as well die here as anywhere." For their protection the mayor asked them to leave with people guarding them through the mob of angry men. After that, Maria heard people cursing her whenever she went out.

At that time, most people (including ministers) did not approve of women doing work in public.

Her famous Unitarian minister, Dr. Channing, sort-of supported the anti-slavery movement but didn't support pushing for freeing the slaves right away. Many people in that church did not support anti-slavery groups at all. So Maria Chapman stopped going to that church.

She became very active in writing and raising money for anti-slavery groups and was the chief assistant to William Lloyd Garrison, editing his famous anti-slavery newspaper called *The Liberator*.

What's her name? (Maria Chapman)

\*teachers' note: Many abolitionists did not believe in racial equality. The author of this lesson was not able to find out whether or not Maria Chapman did.

Questions:

How did Maria Chapman surprise people that she didn't know well?

What was her women's group demanding?

How do we know she was brave?

What consequences did she have to deal with for her bravery?

Do you know people now (or know of people) who do things to support groups that have little power? What consequences do they have to deal with?

### **ACTIVITY 3: MAKING SIGNS – 18 MINUTES**

**(NOTE: IF ACTIVITY 2 IN SESSION 6A, "PRACTICING TAKING ACTION" (ROLE PLAYING), WAS NOT DONE LAST TIME, SUBSTITUTE IT HERE.)**

#### **Description of Activity**

Say that it's up to each of us to work for racial 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.

Talk about signs about racial justice that UUs might have in their yards or carry for marches, such as Black Lives Matter or the welcoming neighbors signs in English, Spanish, and Arabic.

Read a few pages of *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights* by Rob Sanders, Illustrated by Jared Andrew Schorr and show children several of the pictures in the book, especially those showing signs.

Discuss what signs they would like to put up (carry) for racial justice and then make one. If possible display them in the coffee hour room for adults to see.

### **CLOSING -- 10 MINUTES**

#### **Description of Activity**

Gather children in a circle. Say:

Today we talked about speaking out for justice. This is a really important thing we can do to work for racial justice. It's often not easy and it takes practice. But it's an important part of what we do to be anti-racist Unitarian Universalists. Are you ready?

(Follow class' routine closing procedure.)

Hand out Take It Home and articles 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.

## Take It Home! (for Racial Justice Lesson 6B)

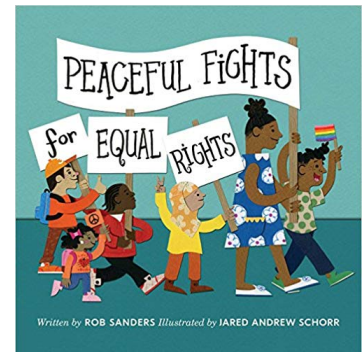
In our classes we heard a story about Maria Chapman, a brave Unitarian anti-slavery activist and we practiced ways we can act in anti-racist ways to insist on justice.

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).

A fun picture book to read together and discuss is *Peaceful Fights for Equal Rights* by Ron Sanders, illustrated by Jared Andrew Schorr. NY: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2018.



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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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Handout 2 (2 sides)

[Shannon Gaggero, Contributor](#) I'm a mother striving to raise socially conscious children and blogging about the journey at [strivingparent.com](http://strivingparent.com)  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/preserving-my-childrens-innocence-is-an-act-of-preserving\\_us\\_57d2d8f4e4b0273330ac3dae](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/preserving-my-childrens-innocence-is-an-act-of-preserving_us_57d2d8f4e4b0273330ac3dae)

## Preserving My Children's Innocence Is An Act Of Preserving White Supremacy



**The choices I make as a parent matter.** *“Having a child is like wearing your heart on your sleeve.”* I’ve heard several different versions of this colloquialism and since becoming a mother myself, I can confirm this feeling as true. My natural instinct is to fiercely protect and guard my children from any harm, mental or physical. Acknowledging that my children will not escape experiences of pain in their life often overwhelms me and leaves me feeling anxious.

Yet, in all likelihood, the pain my children will experience will be considered rites of passage: broken bones, friendship woes, first love and first heartbreak, not getting into their dream college.

I don’t pretend to be able to predict the future, so admittedly I have no clue what lives my children will lead. However, my racial and class privilege make my children exempt from many of the worries that parents of color, low-income parents and parents within marginalized populations must face with regards to their children on top of the parental concerns we universally share.

- My children will not be racially profiled as they play in our neighborhood.
- My children will not fear the police.
- My children will see themselves represented in books, media, and educational narratives.

I could go on, but the point is the world we live in centers and celebrates my children. As I’ve come to understand this truth and see its far reach in our day-to-day life, I’ve realized something else: When I shield my children from injustice in the name of preserving their innocence, what I’m actually preserving is white supremacy. The world we live in centers and celebrates my children. ... But of course, not all kids are granted this privilege.

Another familiar colloquialism is *“let kids be kids.”* But of course, not all kids are granted this privilege. Tamir Rice certainly was not afforded this privilege. Trayvon Martin was not afforded this privilege. Dajerria Becton was not afforded this privilege. The Black and brown children racially profiled on my neighborhood listserves are not afforded this privilege.

I want my children to explore, play and enjoy the world around them. I also want them to understand that injustice exists. If I am unwilling to unveil how systems of

oppression work, I'm playing into the notion that my children's innocence is more fragile and more important than other children who do not have the option to have their innocence preserved. White supremacy lives on through this choice.

But your children are only 2 and 4, you might say. True. Good thing there are many actions I can take right now that are both developmentally appropriate and plant the seeds for more in-depth discussions and discourse in the future! Thanks to [Raising Race Conscious Children](#), I've been able to identify research-based strategies to talk about race and racism with my children. I'm also currently taking a course called Raising An Advocate that's helping me think through the ways my various privileges affect my parenting choices.

The first step was to buy books and toys with diverse representation and then use these products to name race openly and honestly. My kids can name their whiteness as well as identify other skin tones as we read books or play games. Both of my children now bring up race proactively, albeit in different ways. My 4-year-old will notice someone's skin color and make connections to other people in his life that have similar skin tone. My 2-year-old will put her arm beside mine and say "both peachy!"

After the foundation of naming race was set, I began to talk about injustice through the lens of unfairness. These conversations remain short and again, we use books and games to provide context.

For instance, over the summer there was a day of collective action in support of Black Lives Matter following the shootings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castille. We were on vacation, but I brought several books with us, including [Click, Clack, Moo](#) (a hilarious story about barnyard animals who go on strike to achieve improved living conditions) as well as [Amazing Grace](#), (a moving story about a young Black girl who overcomes sexism and racism to land the part of Peter Pan in her classroom play). I used these books to name race and discuss the protests happening around the country.

I said something like, "many people are angry and sad because people with brown and black skin are treated differently by police and that's not fair. When people protest they are saying, 'I don't like that!' and are working to make change."

Naming race and naming injustice with my children are direct actions I can take right now to begin to dismantle white supremacy. I no longer want to preserve their innocence as this preserves the status quo.

Recently, I heard a person say the work we do inside our families is the ultimate grassroots organizing. Yes! The choices I make as a parent matter. The anti-racist work I do within the context of my family can affect powerful change.

What's your take? Are you ready to stop preserving your child's innocence and start dismantling white supremacy?

2016



## **Black Pain, Black Joy, and Racist Fear: Supporting Black Children in a Hostile World**

**By Angel Dunbar, PhD (Post-Doctoral Associate, University of Maryland)**

August 30, 2017

<https://psychologybenefits.org/2017/08/30/encouraging-black-childrens-self-expression/>



This is the second in a series of blog posts that the American Psychological Association (APA) will publish regarding racial/ethnic socialization practices, programs, and approaches. APA is putting together a clearinghouse of resources to help parents/caregivers to protect youth of color and themselves from the psychological damage of discrimination and racism. For more information

regarding APA's new initiative and to provide feedback as we continue to engage in this series, please visit: [www.apa.org/pi/res](http://www.apa.org/pi/res)

On Saturday August 12, 2017, I awoke to images from the night before of dozens of White nationalists marching through the University of Virginia Charlottesville carrying torches and chanting "you will not replace us."

This chant, "*you will not replace us*," embodies the perception held by White nationalists that people of color are eminent threats to the continuation of White supremacy. However, this dangerous fear is not limited to self-proclaimed White nationalist. It runs deep within and across various institutions that impact adults and children alike, including the education and justice systems.

Taking in the images from Charlottesville and considering them against the backdrop of other overt and covert displays of racism in recent years, I was reminded of the intense emotionality of racism and its effect on Black children.

I imagine the level of fear it must take for a police officer to shoot a 12-year-old Black child within two seconds of arriving on the scene. I wonder about the level of hatred one must hold to be able to shoot at Black teenagers enjoying music in their car. I recall the anger and pain one feels at not only experiencing racism but also vicariously witnessing and learning about racism. And I consider the constant emotional restraint needed to remain composed so as not to become another victim of racist fear.

Unsurprisingly, parents and caregivers are increasingly concerned for the wellbeing of Black children. Research shows that:

- Black children experience harsher disciplinary action at school,
- their neutral facial expressions are viewed as more aggressive and threatening than their White peers, and
- they are more likely to be expected to misbehave even when engaging in normal play.

When it seems like Black children are mistreated for expressing anger, fear, joy, or for simply existing, it can be a daunting task to figure out how to best protect them from harm while also allowing them to live and thrive unapologetically. Here are a few things to consider from the research:



### 1. Strike a balance

It is reasonable to encourage children to control their emotions (e.g., “don’t get too upset” “don’t react in anger”) and monitor their behavior in certain contexts—such as with teachers and administrators, law enforcement, and unknown adults—in an effort to decrease their chances of being harmed or treated with bias. Research shows that *not* talking to Black children about racism and what they may witness or experience can actually lead to *more*

distress later, due to the shock of unexpected exposure.

However, excessive suppression of emotions without an outlet can lead to depression, anxiety, acting out, and can even take a toll on cardiovascular health. For balance, caregivers can encourage children to feel comfortable expressing their emotions at home and with close friends and extended family.

Speaking of emotional outlets...

### 2. Processing emotions is essential

As adults, experiencing or witnessing racism can be extremely emotionally upsetting. So imagine how overwhelming it must be for children, who are still developing the skill of managing their emotions, to experience or even learn about racism. Research shows that validating and being sensitive to children’s feelings of fear, anger, and sadness helps them learn to effectively cope with these emotions. It also helps to prevent depression, anxiety, and behavior problems.



Validation and sensitivity comes in many forms, including allowing children to express their feelings, comforting them with physical affection and reassuring words, and problem solving with them. Here are some questions you can ask your child the next

time he or she is upset by images they see in the media or something that happened to them....

“What happened?”

“Why do you think that happened?”

“How did it make you feel?”

“What can we do to feel better?”

Also check out this blog post\* by Dr. Riana Anderson about how our own emotional distress to racism can impact these conversations with children.

\*<https://psychologybenefits.org/2017/07/26/but-daddy-why-was-he-shot-how-to-talk-to-children-about-race-today/>



### **3. Surround children with love and remain joyful**

Being discriminated against and learning that others may not like them simply because they are Black can take a toll on children’s sense of self-worth and overall health. Having positive, warm, and supportive relationships both in and outside of the home can buffer against the negative impact of racism.

Such warm and supportive relationships are a constant reminder to children that they have people to turn to and that they are loved, lovable, and have immense value. In addition to everyday love and support, sending children counter messages and positive affirmations about blackness can also boost their confidence and self-esteem.

Despite the violence against Black lives and the accompanying trauma, the Black community continues to persevere and remain joyful. In the words of activist and writer Kleaver Cruz, “Black joy is resistance.” Most importantly, Black joy is healing.

#### **Biography:**

Dr. Angel Dunbar is a postdoctoral associate in the African American Studies Department. Dr. Dunbar completed her M.S. and Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies at the University of North Carolina Greensboro and her B.A. in psychology and sociology at the University of Delaware.

Dr. Dunbar is a Developmental Scientist whose research focuses on understanding the unique developmental challenges that children of color encounter and the family processes and individual factors that influence positive adaptation in the face of these challenges. Specifically, her program of research addresses the following: (1) the detrimental effects of racial/ethnic discrimination on the social-emotional, psychological, and academic outcomes of children of color, (2) the messages parents relay about race/racism and emotions in an attempt to mitigate these effects, and (3) children’s individual protective factors such as emotional, behavioral, and physiological self-regulation and emotion understanding. Dr. Dunbar’s research has been funded by the National Institutes of Health.