

Growing Anti-racist UU's: A Curriculum for Children
uucharlottesville.org/

Controversial Historical Memorials

Lesson 7 for Grades 3-5

By Frank Dukes, Linda Dukes, and Dinny Jensen

LESSON OVERVIEW

Children participating in this and the following lessons should have already had at least Lesson 1 (Skin Tones) and Lesson 2 (Identity).

Introduction

Charlottesville, Virginia has been the scene of protests regarding the decision by the City to remove two statues linked to the Civil War and Jim Crow eras. Charlottesville is only one among many cities in the southern United States that is facing the divisive issue of removing or preserving statues that glorify Civil War heroes.

Other areas have problematic memorials for other reasons. NYC's Central Park, for example, until recently had a statue of Dr. J. Marion Sims, a famous gynecologist who experimented on enslaved women. This statue has been removed.

(<http://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/central-park-statue-gynecologist-marion-sims-removed-article-1.3938490>)

Please adapt this lesson to fit your context. Consider . . .

- What are major identities/power imbalances in your area?
- Think about the landscape of your town or state. Who is represented in the statues, memorials, and buildings that are named after prominent people? Is there a site (statue, memorial, park, or building) that may be offensive? What stories are told by those spaces?
- Are any of these spaces under discussion or targets of activists now?
- An example of a lesson for Connecticut third graders is here
<https://www.fairfieldhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/MonumentsLessonPlan.pdf>

It is important that children have a deeper understanding of the history behind problematic memorials in terms of racial justice and the impact of these memorials on African Americans and other people of color. Along with this understanding comes a call to action. What can we do to support our opinions and create change in our own communities?

Goals

- To encourage children to think more deeply about public spaces and what memorials there may represent.

- To encourage children to think about what they value and how that can be honored in public spaces.

Learning Objectives

- To deepen the children's knowledge of the history and background of Confederate statues (or other problematic places in their town).
- To experience a mini-design process to celebrate/honor something/someone they value.

Lesson-at-a-Glance

Opening	7 minutes
Activity 1: Monuments	15 minutes
Activity 2: Designing own public space	22 minutes
Closing	5 minutes

LEADER PREPARATION

Listen to New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu delivering a moving speech on May 19, 2017, about why the city took down four Confederate monuments that had been installed by supporters of the "Cult of the Lost Cause." Although his speech is not intended for UUs, it does exemplify many values that UUs hold dear: including all people, confronting the truths of our history, noticing lies by omission (much of this history isn't told in public spaces), moving towards healing and understanding each other.

Find his speech at

https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/national/full-speech-mitch-landrieu-addresses-removal-of-confederate-statues/2017/05/31/cbc3b3a2-4618-11e7-8de1-cec59a9bf4b1_video.html?utm_term=.b8976beb5bb4 Full speech:

LESSON PLAN

Materials

Chart Paper

Thick Markers

Masking/painter's tape (to hang designs on the wall)

Technology to show a Power Point presentation. If this is not possible, the slides could be printed to show in a small class.

Chalice

Copies of Take It Home handout

Welcoming and Entering: Usual routines can be followed

Learn names of children in class with a game of your choosing, if everyone doesn't know each other.

Chalice Lighting

Reading:

Memorials tell us a lot about history but sometimes they get it wrong!

Share Joys and Concerns

Activity 1: Monuments (15 minutes)

This activity goes with the power point either projected or printed (see Leader Resources).

Does anyone have a favorite monument anywhere?

(Use the whole group continuum technique by designating one corner of the room as “yes” and another corner of the room as “no.”)

Continuum: How many of you know this monument? [show image of Washington Monument and have children go to either the yes or no side of the room. If they don't know it, give them a clue that it's in Washington, DC. . . . that it is a monument for an American president] What and where is it?

If you know this one, go to this side of the room [show Jefferson Memorial. Clue: it's also for an early American president].

(continue having students move to one side of the room or another for next questions)

How about this one? Clue: it's also in Washington, DC . . . It for the president during the American Civil War? Lincoln]

Who knows what the American Civil War was [go to another side of the room]? What were the two sides? What side was (your state) on? [show map] (Ask for volunteers to answer these and the questions that follow.)

[Since the authors of this lesson are located in Charlottesville, VA, we have used the Confederate statues here, but this is only one of many examples you might use.]

Don't answer out loud, just go to the “yes” side of the room – how many of you know who this statue is? (clue: a Civil War general on the Confederate—southern--side) Where is it? [General Thomas Johnathan “Stonewall” Jackson, Charlottesville, VA]

Don't answer out loud – how many of you know who this statue is? (clue: probably the most famous Civil War Confederate general) Where is it? [General Robert E. Lee, Charlottesville]

If you see something that all these statues have in common, go to this side of the room [show slide of names]. (Call on some for ideas.)

All of these statues are of White men. Why do you think that is? Is that fair?

In many places, there is a conflict over whether to keep or remove Confederate statues. Can anyone explain something about the conflicts over Confederate statues?

Confederate statues were put up long after the Civil War at a time when Whites treated Black people horribly. That was in the early 1900s when most White people openly talked about their belief that they were superior to Black people.

Many Southern communities are divided over what should be done with the Confederate statues.

These are a few stories that some people believe:*

“The Civil War was not fought over slavery but about states’ rights, the rights of states to make their own decisions.”

True story: When each Southern state left the United States they openly talked about how important it was to keep slavery.

“Robert E. Lee was a good person because he freed his slaves.”

True story: When Robert E. Lee’s father-in-law died, Lee inherited slaves. The will said they must be freed within 5 years. Lee asked the court to be able to continue enslaving them, but the court forced him to free them.

“Many blacks fought on the side of South (Confederacy).”

True story: In fact, only a handful (some historians say under 200) African Americans fought for the Confederacy.

“You can’t erase history.”

True and complete history needs to be told. But celebrating these statues tells a false history. And what history do we want celebrated in our public spaces?

“All African Americans hate the Confederate statues in Charlottesville and really want them to come down.” *

Although many African Americans in Charlottesville want the statues to be moved and believe these statues honor White Supremacy, some others don’t care about them and would prefer the attention and money spent on moving them be spent on things like education and affordable housing.

***Please adapt this to your locality. It is highly unlikely that everyone in any group agrees on actions to take about specific monuments.**

Activity 2: Designing own public space (22 minutes)

Tell the students to imagine they are on the design team to plan a new public space in an important part of their town/city/county. (If your town has a prominent courthouse or city hall, perhaps it is next to that.) Say that in a minute they'll work in teams to imagine a design to show people what is important to honor or celebrate. This could be honoring a person, event, or idea.

Teachers: you will need to have an adult with each group of 3-6 children unless you have some mature children who can lead a group without dominating. If you know the children and how they interact, it might be better to form groups based on this knowledge rather than simply counting off. Provide a large piece of flip-chart paper and markers for each group.

Tell class they will have 15 minutes in small groups to answer these questions (have them written on flip-chart paper in advance to post up front now):

- 1) What are some values that are important to you and your town?
- 2) What idea, person, or event would you like to honor/celebrate for upholding these values? Why?
- 3) What might the public space **look like** to honor this idea, person, or event?

Tell them that one or more of the children should be prepared to tell their idea to the whole group.

After 10 minutes, tell the groups that they have 5 more minutes.

After 15 minutes, bring everyone back to the circle and ask each group to share.

Closing

Extinguish Chalice

Reading: "Never be afraid to raise your voice for honesty and truth and compassion against injustice and lying and greed. If people all over the world...would do this, it would change the earth."

— William Faulkner

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 (for families)

This is a handout about the Lee and Jackson statues in Charlottesville, VA.

The Lee and Jackson Statues in Charlottesville, VA

Challenging Lost Cause History

The story of the “Lost Cause” revises history and promotes a romanticized “Southern way of life,” including fables of the Confederate leaders. It denies the reality of slavery as well as its centrality as the key cause of the Civil War. In “Lost Cause” school curricula, children even learn the name of General Lee’s horse—while being taught that slavery itself was a benevolent institution.

Southern states' articles of secession and the Constitution of the Confederate States of America explicitly stated that the "cornerstone" of their secession and armed resurrection was the maintenance of white supremacy and slavery. *Revisionist history denies or downplays that connection.*

Lee is subject to many revisionist myths. He is portrayed as a benevolent master who freed his slaves and as the most honorable man of his era, a product of his time. *Revisionist history ignores many inconvenient facts; a small sample includes:*

Lee petitioned the courts to break the terms of his father-in-law’s will so he could keep his slaves. He freed them years later only after the courts made him.

- the actual circumstances in which his father-in-law’s slaves were freed;
- the warning to Lee of the scope of his mistake by his superior General Scott when he resigned his U.S. commission;
- the whipping of his enslaved escapees as a form of punishment;
- the fact that some 40% of his fellow Virginian officers and others in his own family stayed in the U.S. Army.

African-American freedmen and white allies joined together after the Civil War to lead integrated Reconstruction-era (1865-1877) Southern state governments. But after 1877, white supremacist politicians regained control through relentless violence. *Revisionist history ignores this violence and justifies this takeover by inventing false tales of corruption and sexual violence against white women.*

At the time of the Civil War (1861-1865), 52% of the population of Charlottesville and Albemarle County (VA) were enslaved and another 2% were free blacks. Today, due to the ravages of violence and Jim Crow segregation that drove so many north, only about 14% of the combined population of the two jurisdictions is African American.

These laws were promoted by leading UVA professors such as Paul Barringer (“The Negro ... is a liar, a thief, a robber, gambler, perhaps murderer or highwayman, fearing neither God or man”) and Harvey Jordan, an influential eugenicist of his era. They had prominent UVA Medical Center buildings named after them [Jordan had that honor removed by UVA in late 2016].

White supremacy was codified in the Virginia State Constitution of 1902 and in Virginia’s so-called "Racial Integrity Laws" of the 1920s. These Jim Crow laws were reinforced by calculated terrorist attacks waged by vigilantes, impromptu lynchings, and intimidation by groups such as the Ku Klux Klan. The Charlottesville chapter of the KKK was founded in 1921. *Revisionist history ignores or minimizes these facts.*

The white supremacist order was sanctified, in part, by erecting monuments such as the statues of Lee and Jackson. These monuments were donated by Paul

McIntire, a staunch segregationist. The “Lost Cause” account was amplified by large commemorative ceremonies, such as the one that accompanied the 1924 unveiling of the Lee statue. The KKK marched through Charlottesville’s streets and burned a widely-visible cross on Brown’s Mountain near an African American church.

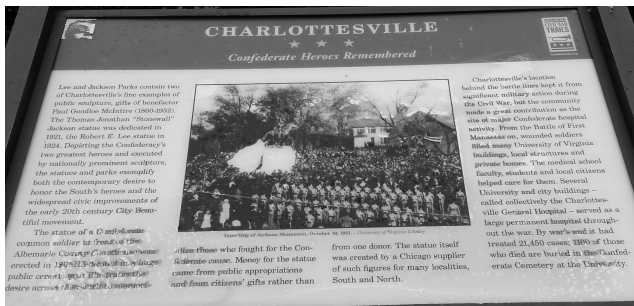
From BRC Final Report: “The Lee and Jackson statues belong in no public space unless their history as symbols of white supremacy is revealed and their respective parks are transformed in ways that promote freedom and equity in our community.”

Confederate monuments in Southern public landscapes remained largely unchallenged until the 21st century. After a prolonged public debate, the Charlottesville City Council voted in early 2017 to move the Lee Monument and transform the Jackson statue in place; following the Aug. 12 “Unite the Right” rally, they voted to move Jackson also. As of Jan. 2020, the removal of the statues is blocked by state law. In the meantime, these parks have become rallying cries for the white supremacy of the KKK and the alt-right, including the events of on July 8 and August 12, 2017.

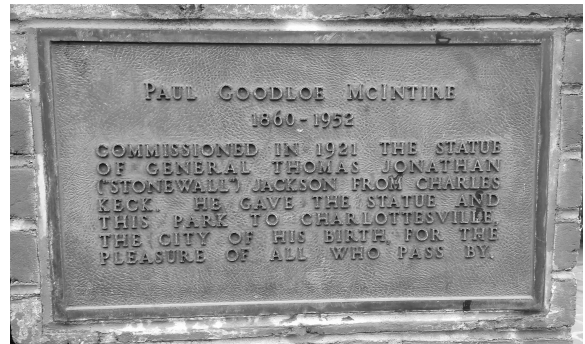
The plaques that mark the Lee and Jackson statues contain language that reinforces the Lost Cause mythology [update: the Lee plaque was removed July ‘17]:

- Lee and Jackson are described only as “heroes.”
- The plaques make no mention of slavery or Jim Crow.
- The monuments are described as expressions of the 20th-century “City Beautiful movement,” excluding all mention of their role in defining “whites only” public spaces that enforced racial segregation.
- Paul McIntire, the donor honored on the Jackson plaque, is not identified as an active segregationist.
- The Stonewall Jackson monument stands beside the courthouse, an ample warning to blacks that they could not expect justice under the Rule of Law supposedly protected by the U.S. Constitution that Jackson rebelled against.

The monuments are described in the plaque below as “illustrating the desire across the South to memorialize those who fought for the Confederacy,” ignoring the large number of African American Southerners who did not share this desire, including many who fought for the Union. A significant number of white Southerners also fought for the Union.



This plaque was removed July 6, 2017



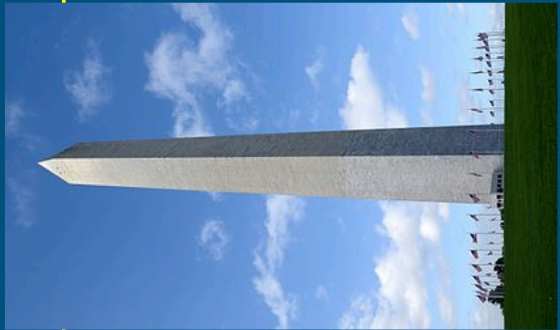
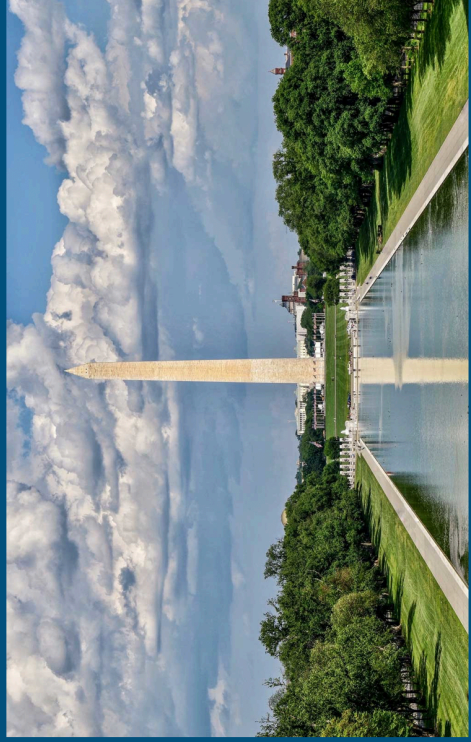
McIntire plaque on Jackson Statue

Leader resources

LEADER RESOURCES (from power point)



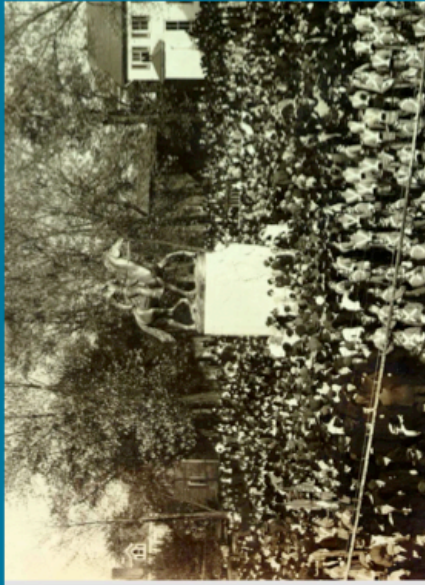
What is this?



What is This?



Who is This?



Who is This?



Names of People Memorialized

Thomas Jefferson
Abraham Lincoln
Stonewall Jackson
Robert E. Lee



Map of Civil War

