

What Price Justice? (10 – 14 years)

Key words and concepts

- Justice: the moral principle of fairness for all.
- Freedom: the rights of individual to be able to take part in civil and political life without discrimination or repression.
- Non-violence: the power of refusing to use violence; the restraint required not to descend to the violence used by oppressors. Gandhi and King used non-violent tactics, inspired by Jesus and other political activities for justice.

Learning activities

- Ask your learners to think about 'the price of justice'. To stimulate discussion show the Muppet Christmas Carol – Marley and Marley (find it on You Tube). Ask them why the characters are in chains. What is holding them captive? What could set them free?
- Ask what sort of things people are usually sent to prison for. Write them up on a picture with some prison bars. Show pictures of Gandhi and King in prison and ask your students if they know or can guess what they were supposed to have done that is 'wrong'. Add these comments to the bars.
- Find two or three more examples of contemporary political prisoners or prisoners of conscious. Amnesty International's website is a good place to look, especially their current letter-writing campaigns. Draw out as a class why these people have been imprisoned. Add the reasons and any quotes that sum up the issue to the bars.
- King wrote a famous letter while he was in Birmingham jail, which was written on scraps of newspaper and smuggled out. One of the things he said was that 'we have a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws.' Ask your students to work in pairs to work out what their message from prison would be and what the possible consequences of different messages might be. Encourage them to write it out for display on newspaper inside prison bars.
- Ask students to investigate what Paul said about being in chains for the sake of the gospel. Read the whole passage in Philippians 1: 12-26, or cut up key passages and give to groups to explore. Discuss what the chains represent; what freedom has Paul found? What does he feel about the chains? Add these notes to the prison bars.
- Search a quote website for Gandhi's sayings on 'freedom', 'courage' and 'strength'. Display 10- 20 or copy and paste onto sheets. Give groups one or two quotes, either of their own choice or randomly distributed, to discuss and explore. Share with the class. Add these thoughts to the prison bars.
- Use the Buddhist Wheel of Life in Appendix 1. Around the outer circle are the '12 chains of causation'; the elements of human life that keep us trapped, such as craving, desire, sensation, and so on. Discuss whether this represents a different type of being 'trapped' to Gandhi's, and Paul's. What freedoms are being referred to? How do they differ?
- Encourage students to make connections between the quotations. They might add some of their own

comments about 'the chains that bind us' from these sources to the prison display.

- "I stood by when" Tell your students how, in 1961, seven black and six white young people known as the 'Freedom Riders', decided to travel by bus from Washington to New Orleans, crossing six southern states of America, to challenge local practices of racial segregation. In Birmingham, Alabama, police stood by when members of the Ku Klux Klan beat the Freedom Riders with lead pipes, baseball bats and bicycle chains. Ask students if they can think of other examples of people 'standing by' when wrong- doing was taking place. Explain that in 1945 Daisaku Ikeda was a teenager in Japan when the US dropped two nuclear bombs and that he decided then that he could not 'stand by' while the existence and threat of these weapons has remained. Ikeda is well-known today as a Buddhist philosopher and writer, and founder of the Soka Gakkai International (SGI), the world's largest community of non-ordained Buddhists, or Buddhists who are not monks or nuns. Show students some ideas from the Soka Gakkai International (SGI) website campaigning against nuclear weapons and ask students if they know the reasons people give for keeping nuclear weapons.
- Remind your group of the story Jesus told of the 'Good Samaritan' (Luke 10.25-37). Explain that Martin Luther King, as a Christian, was influenced by this story, and Gandhi and Ikeda also held Jesus in high regard and followed the teaching of this parable. Ask students to rewrite the story as a poem from the point of view of the priest, the Levite (I stood by when....) and the Samaritan (I didn't stand by when).
- Your students could write a similar poem thinking about instances when they might be tempted to just stand by, and instances when they have the courage to not stand by. Alternatively they could write a poem in the style of 'First they came...' by Martin Niemoller (find this poem online).
- The poems could be written on paper chains. At the end of the poem they could make a record of two or three questions about such dilemmas and suggest how people might go about answering them.
- Ask students to consider in pairs whether there are differences in the basic beliefs of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr and Daisaku Ikeda. Ask them to say what experiences each man had that helped form their views. Issue the pairs or small groups of students with pictures of Gandhi, King and Ikeda. They can stick these in the middle of large sheets of poster paper. Around each picture they should write a number of statements about the beliefs and the experiences of each man so far as they have been able to discover so far. Ask them to link up similar statements and encourage them to explain how some people use religious sources such as the parable of the Good Samaritan to help them understand how to act in difficult circumstances.
- Find a clip online of blacksmiths making chains. Accompany this with some music such as Alexander Mosolov's *Zavod (The Iron Foundry)* Op.19. Ask students about their reactions to the short film and the music and the idea of people being in chains. Ask them to reflect, on their own, on what they are making of their lives so far. What might they do in their future life to help 'set people free'? Gather some views and then offer them Ikeda's saying that, 'true and lasting peace will be realised only by forging bonds of trust between people at the deepest level in the depths of their lives'. Ask students to talk to a partner about the difference between chains of despair and chains of strength that bind people together. Can they give examples of each? Gather views from the class.
- Show images of Martin Luther King's marches in 1960s America and Gandhi's march for equal rights for Indians in South Africa. Ask students how different they think these marches were from the riots and

protests that sometimes take place in Britain today (e.g., in London in 2011, or more recent example if appropriate). Ask if students can identify current stories in Britain or America that reflect concerns about exclusion, racism and freedom.

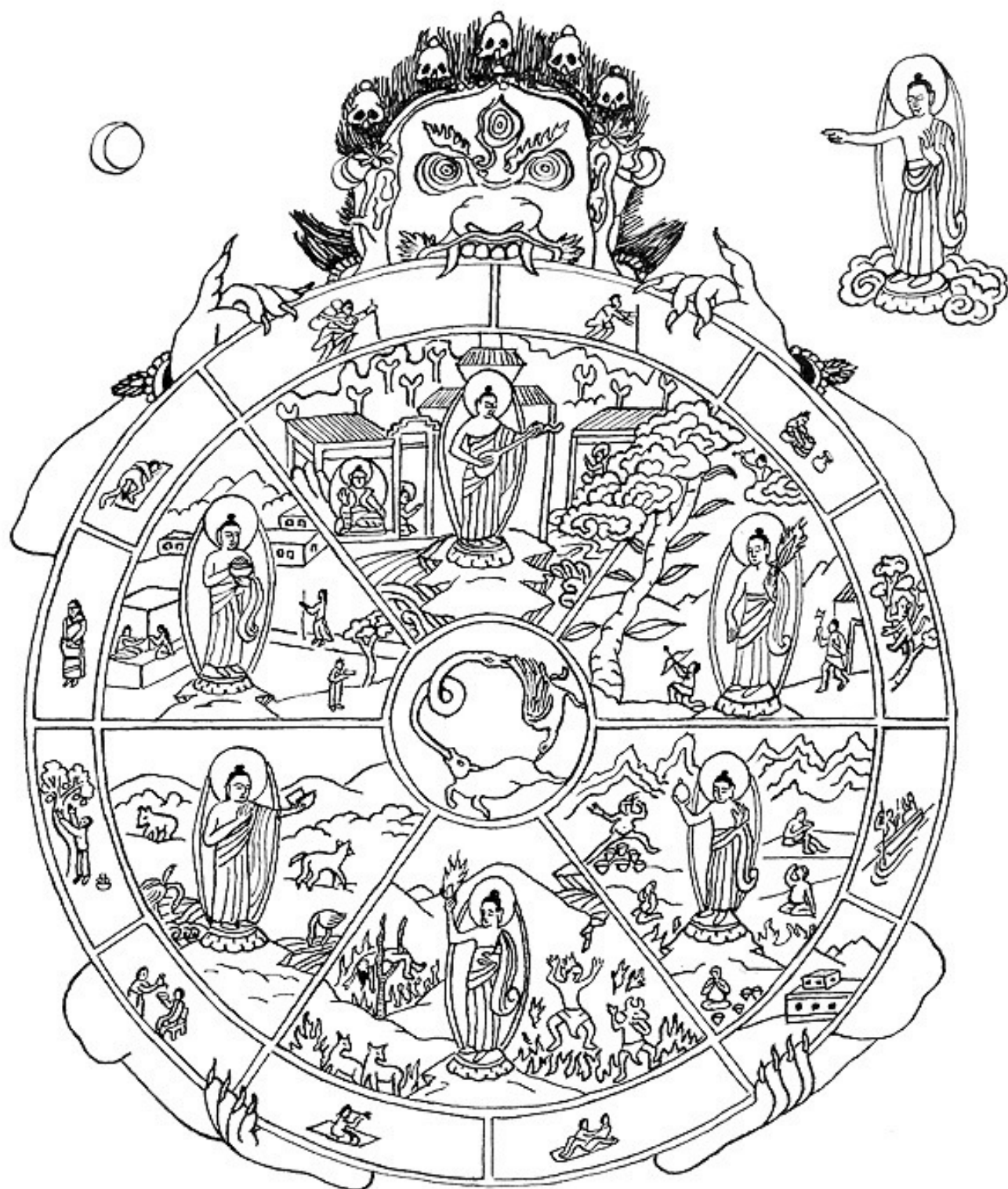
- Ask students to work in pairs to consider problems in the world today and to draft some ideas on what (a) Martin Luther King; (b) Gandhi and (c) Ikeda might write on a protest placard. What would students write on a placard about injustices in today's world? Ask them to create placards with a written explanation to display.
- Remind students of the posters they produced around the pictures of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr and Daisaku Ikeda and offer them some further quotes, e.g., Gandhi's, 'You must be the change you want to see'; King's 'Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love'; and Ikeda's 'A great revolution of character in just a single individual will help achieve a change in the destiny of a nation and further will cause a change in the destiny of humankind'. Find and display more quotes along these lines, or ask groups to choose quotes online.

Some students might like to go further and make quotes into poems, raps, and songs. Search online for a rap based on Gandhi's quote, 'Be the change that you want to see' and Martin Luther King's 'Free at last' speech set to rhythm / percussion.

To challenge students to demonstrate their level of progress through this investigation, encourage them to refocus on the key question, 'What price justice?' Ask them to work in small groups to research and put together a presentation that could be written or filmed that has the following features:

- a description of the 'price paid' by Gandhi, King and Ikeda in their fights for justice;
- an outline of responses to Gandhi, King and Ikeda from different Hindus, Christians and Buddhists;
- use of different sources and arguments to explain the reasons for different responses by Hindus, Christians and Buddhists;
- students' own views on how the life and teaching of Gandhi, King and Ikeda inspires people to fight for justice in the world today;
- what students find to be the most important features of the life and teaching of Gandhi, King and Ikeda for themselves

Appendix 1



*An interpretation of the Wheel of Life © 2012 Jim Robinson.
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