

# English and Social Studies Curriculum Guide

for the Sisters of Mercy Critical Concerns



## SECTION 4: NONVIOLENCE



Mercy Education  
System of the Americas

Educación de la Misericordia  
de las Américas

# Nonviolence



## English and Social Studies Curriculum Guide for the Sisters of Mercy Critical Concerns

### Definition

Nonviolence is the use of peaceful means, whether individual or national, to resolve conflict and bring about political or social justice. In a world of increased gun violence, war, genocide, suicide, and environmental destruction, violence is at the root of all the other critical concerns. Nonviolent solutions are desperately needed during these uncertain times.

### Characteristics

- To be nonviolent is not to be inactive. Nonviolence requires positive action to resist oppression and make the world more just.
- Nonviolence is a climate of equality and respect; the quality of being able to see one's own vulnerability and to recognize it in others. Nonviolence is empathy not apathy, questioning not accusing, receptivity not rigidity, reason not inflammatory speech, and community not tribalism.
- Nonviolence is a commitment to the human rights of all people.
- Violence can be perpetrated physically, emotionally, and mentally and is intended by the perpetrator to exert control over individuals, families, communities, and commercial and government entities. Advocates of nonviolence seek to understand and engage rather than dominate.
- At the national level, the Sisters of Mercy are committed to nuclear disarmament, arms reduction, using dialogue over armed conflict, reducing domestic violence and abuse of women and children, stopping human trafficking and reducing violence in our communities; common sense gun violence prevention legislation, an end to the death penalty, an end to the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, and dialogue with Syria and Iran.

### Essential Questions

- What is your definition of nonviolence?
- What are the origins of violence?

- What are examples of nonviolent movements throughout history and were they effective or ineffective?
- Is there a connection between race and police violence? Why or why not?
- What are the techniques of nonviolent protest?
- How is violence connected to the other critical concerns?
- What can individuals do in support of nonviolence that reflects Mercy priorities?

### **Recommended Topics**

- Gun Violence
- Gun Control and the Second Amendment
- War
- Nuclear Weapons
- Civil Disobedience (Gandhi / MLK)
- Just War Theory
- Genocide
- Suicide
- Corporate Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Suicide and Self Harm
- Gang Violence
- Gun Violence and the Students from Parkland, FL
- Cyberbullying
- Interpersonal Violence, Dating/Domestic Violence
- Bullying and Bystander Behaviors
- Use of Language
- Terrorism
- Connection Between Poverty and Violence

### **Recommended Resources**

- [Sisters of Mercy Justice Site on Nonviolence](#)
- [Sisters of Mercy Links on Nonviolence](#)
- [Homeboy Industries](#)
- [Catholic Nonviolence Initiative](#)
- [Pax Christi USA](#)
- [Pax Christi International](#)
- [Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide](#)
- [U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking](#)
- [Conceptual Unit Outlines](#)
- [Just War Theory](#)
- [Justlistening.net](#)

## Recommended Readings

### Articles

- ["Civil Disobedience" by Henry David Thoreau](#)
- [The History of the NRA](#)
- ["Just War - or a Just War?" by Jimmy Carter](#)
- [The King Philosophy](#)
- ["Christian Peacemaking" by Katie Murphy](#)

### Fiction

- Remarque, Erich. *All Quiet on the Western Front*
- O'Brien, Tim. *Going After Cacciato, The Things they Carried*
- Shaara, Michael. *The Killer Angels*
- Robert Cormier, *The Chocolate War*

### Nonfiction

- Pinker, Steven. *The Better Angels of Our Nature*
- King, Jr., Martin Luther. *Strength to Love and I Have a Dream*
- Gandhi, Mahatma. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*
- Powers, Samantha. *A Problem From Hell*
- Wiseman, Rosaline. *Queen Bees and Wannabes*
- Marshall Rosenberg. *Nonviolent Communication: A language of life*
- Merton, Thomas. *New Seeds of Contemplation*
- Ilibagiza, Immaculee. *Left to Tell: Discovering God Amidst the Rwandan Holocaust*

### Recommended Videos

- "Gandhi" film
- "Selma" film
- [Michael Walzer on Just War Theory](#)
- [America's Gun Problem](#)
- [Aaron Huey: America's native prisoners of war](#)

Lesson with Link and Source	Lesson Topics	Connection to English Curriculum	Connection to Social Studies Curriculum
<p><u>Nonviolence in Young Adult Texts</u> by ReadWriteThink</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 6 Principles of Nonviolence</li> <li>- Conflict Resolution</li> <li>- King’s “I Have a Dream” speech</li> <li>- Essay Writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when studying fictional works involving violence</li> <li>- Use when teaching how to write an essay</li> <li>- Use when investigating how King uses literary devices to enhance persuasive effect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when exploring the Civil Rights Era (USHIS 1950s-1970s)</li> <li>- Use when exploring nonviolent movements in World History: Salt March, Suffrage Parade, Delano-Grape Boycott, Singing Revolution, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Tactics of Nonviolence</u> by Facing History and Ourselves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strategy vs. Tactic</li> <li>- Civil Rights Movement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when studying fictional works involving violence</li> <li>- What tactics of nonviolence could characters in the work use? Would they be successful today? For instance, would <i>Les Miserables</i> be as powerful if Jean Valjean had been violent?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use when exploring the American Civil Rights Movement and Occupy Wall Street movement (USHIS 2010-11)</li> <li>- Use when exploring civil rights movements in World History such as the Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland, the Quiet Revolution in Canada, the Chicano Movement, the American Indian Movement, LGBT movements, the Prague Spring, and the movement for civil rights for indigenous Australians.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Civil Disobedience</u> by PBS SoCal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Civil Disobedience</li> <li>- Thoreau, Gandhi, King Jr.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when studying fictional works involving violent or nonviolent protests:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use when exploring the abolition movement and transcendentalism</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What would Thoreau, Gandhi, King Jr. say about key plot events?</li> <li>- If the characters were civilly disobedient rather than violent (or vice-versa), what do you think would have happened?</li> </ul>	<p>(USHIS 1840-1860)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when exploring nonviolent movements in World History: Salt March, Suffrage Parade, Delano-Grape Boycott, Singing Revolution, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Rohingyan Genocide</u> by Facing History and Ourselves</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Genocide</li> <li>- Ethnic Cleansing</li> <li>- Myanmar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when studying works of fiction or nonfiction about the Holocaust like <i>Night</i>, <i>The Diary of a Young Girl</i>, or <i>The Book Thief</i>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use when exploring U.S. policies towards American Indian tribes in the West; Dawes Severalty Act 1887. (USHIS 1870-1890)</li> <li>- Use when exploring genocides throughout World History such as the Holocaust or the crises in Cambodia, Armenia, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur, and with the Kurds, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><u>Gun Violence</u> by KQED/NPR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gun Control, pro and con</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when studying works of fiction or nonfiction involving gun violence</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Suicide</u> by PBS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suicide Facts and Myths</li> <li>- Warning Signs</li> <li>- Depression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use when studying works of fiction in which a character threatens or commits suicides</li> <li>- Use when studying works of nonfiction about depression or suicide</li> </ul>	

<u>Cyberbullying</u> by the Anti-Defamation League	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Online Social Cruelty</li><li>- Internet Safety</li><li>- Social Norms Theory</li><li>- Civic Responsibility</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use in works of fiction or nonfiction that involve bullying or online cruelty</li></ul>	
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