



# Room In The Inn: Building a Beloved Community

## Lesson Plan 7th - 9th Grade

**Curriculum Connections:** Social Studies, English, Language Arts, Reading

**Thematic Connections:** Citizenship, Friendship, Community, Responsibility, Tolerance, Self-Esteem

### Overview:

The goal of this lesson is to introduce the concept of Martin Luther King's vision of The Beloved Community and why community is important. It is important for this age group to learn about community for the following reasons:

- Prepares students for engaging in community action in the future
- Fosters tolerance and inclusion of those who are different from us
- Begins broadening students' understanding of community

### Goals for 7th - 9th graders learning about The Beloved Community:

- Build awareness of others who are different from us
- Begin laying a foundation for understanding how to live in a diverse community
- Provide tangible means for students to contribute to making their community safe for all people

In this lesson plan we've provided suggested videos, discussion questions, and an activity – we strongly encourage group discussion and the activity to ensure students are learning through participation.

### General Discussion – Suggest doing some questions before and after reading/video

**Read one-pager on "The Beloved Community" and discuss these questions:**

- What is King's vision for The Beloved Community?
- King believed that The Beloved Community could be achieved and was not a lofty apocalyptic dream.
- Do you believe that King's vision is attainable for society? Why or why not?
- What is required of humanity to live in such a community?
- How can you contribute to The Beloved Community becoming a reality?

## Suggested Videos

**Listen to this excerpt from Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech "Birth of a New Nation:"**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leCzzRY\\_RI8+MLK+Beloved+Community](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leCzzRY_RI8+MLK+Beloved+Community) (8 min)

### Discussion Questions:

- What is redemption?
- What is reconciliation?
- What do you think King means by "the aftermath of nonviolence" is redemption and reconciliation?
- What do you think King means by "the aftermath of violence is emptiness and bitterness?"
- What is the risk in seeking to live in this way?

**Learn about Katharine Drexel and the work she did to help initiate The Beloved Community in the world. Read the info sheet about who she is and how she is connected to Nashville and watch this video:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LOCJETLOms&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LOCJETLOms&feature=emb_logo) (23min)

### Discussion Questions:

- Who was Katharine Drexel?
- What did she do to impact her world?
- How did she use what she had to make a difference for those different from her?
- Why did she make a good candidate to be a saint?
- What would you do if you do anything to change the world?

**Ted Talk on The Beloved Community from Doug Shipman:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cP5PAul3H4E>

### Discussion Questions:

- What does living in The Beloved Community begin with? Conversation starter from video: being a good neighbor
- How do you love someone to "home base?"
- How did Doug's trip to Ebenezer Baptist impact his idea of community?
- How are "false connections" the ultimate disrespect to community?
- Do you think the type of reconciliation required in The Beloved Community is possible?

**Watch *Humanite, The Beloved Community* on Amazon Prime or Tubi to learn about the Beloved Community from a musician's perspective. (1 hr)**

### **Discussion Questions:**

- How does Kirk Whalum view The Beloved Community?
- How has music been used as a uniting force in the world?
- What does it mean to affirm differences in community?
- How is affirming difference in community more impactful than conformity in community?
- How can we work in our own communities to bridge divisions and create a beloved community?

### **Activity Options:**

#### **Writing:**

- Have students write about their dream for their community.
- Have students write letters to community leaders about how they think their community could be better.

#### **Art:**

- Have students create a collaborative art piece.  
Check these out: <https://www.pinterest.com/snicket3/collaborative-art-projects-for-kids/>

### **Service Opportunities:**

- Have students research different organizations that are making a difference in their community and how they can get involved.
- Have students select a cause they want to engage in for the rest of the year. If the cause is homelessness, check out these ways to get involved with Room In The Inn:
  - Donate [cold weather items](#)
  - Donate snack packs
  - Donate [Welcome Home Baskets](#)

