

Religions of Star Trek

Lesson 8: Conflict Transformation

Star Date 3.28.2021

Objectives: Explore “the enemy within” and how conflict transformation changes us, as opposed to focusing on how to change, or assimilate, “the other.”

Materials: Teachers should download lesson plan and attachments onto their desktop, login to Unity’s YouTube account.

Time allotments: Suggested for 60 minute online class.

1. Zoom Welcome (as youth arrive into the breakout classroom)

- Teachers and youth are expected to log on to zoom at 11:15am (15 min before class begins at 11:30am) so that everyone can be organized into correct breakout classrooms. We want to make sure there is an attentive adult in each breakout classroom with youth.
- Greet youth and ask everyone to correct their display name as needed. Ask everyone to select “gallery view” to see everyone else.
- Staff will take attendance.

2. Zoom Icebreaker: What’s your favorite...? (10 minutes)

Instruct the youth to find out each teacher’s favorite book, food and season **without using the chat**.

[For teachers: Have one teacher turn off their video, but use audio. Have a second teacher turn off their audio, but use video. Have a third teacher turn off both video and audio. Let youth organize themselves and try out creative ideas without help (e.g. write down the answer and show it to the screen, change “zoom name” to reflect answer). Stop after five minutes even if the youth have not gathered all the information.]

Brief reflection: Ask two or three youth to share whether the experience was fun, boring, challenging, etc. and why.

3. Chalice Lighting

Light a chalice at your home, invite youth to light their own chalices and say together: “We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith, the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

Teacher reads: (from Original Series episodes, “The Tholian Web” and “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield,” Spock)

“In critical moments, (humans) sometimes see exactly what they wish to see.”

“To expect sense from two mentalities of such extreme points of view is not logical.”

“Change is the essential process of all existence.”

4. **Brief Check-in** (5 minutes)

Continue weekly ritual/check-in (e.g. sharing a joy or sorrow so that everyone feels present in class).

5. **Introduction: Conflict** (10 minutes)

Teacher introduces: Today, we are going to think about conflict together. Conflict can be difficult to experience, but that doesn’t mean conflict is something to avoid or get rid of, rather, it is a part of being in relationship with others! Conflict can even provide clarity and build trust.

For conflict to arise requires three parts: (1) two or more interdependent parties, (2) perceived incompatibility and (3) emotional upset.

Ask the youth to indicate, with a show of hands, or emoji reactions, when they resonate with the following (briefly pause after reading each bullet point):

(a) I know I am in conflict with someone when...

- I believe my feelings and needs are more important than theirs OR their feelings and needs are more important than mine
- I want them to change now
- I don’t believe that they can change at all

(b) If I share that I am upset because of someone’s behavior, words or actions, I worry that I will be considered...

- Difficult
- Aggressive
- Sensitive

(c) In most conflicts, I feel that I am expected to...

- Agree and move on
- Not mention it at all
- Confront it and fix it

Question: What thoughts and feelings came up for you while you were listening (e.g. is it challenging, intriguing, strange, etc. for you to think about conflict)?

6. My Enemy and Me (20 minutes)

Teacher introduces: In every episode of Star Trek there is some kind of conflict. Over the last two weeks we have looked at different “enemies” depicted in Star Trek (the Cardassians, Borgs, Ferengis, Klingons and Romulans) and how they actually relate to our human histories and current events.

Now that we have looked at all these different “enemies,” how does that help us to know ourselves better? Having enemies can create fear and suspicion. When that happens, often our worst enemy becomes ourselves. Now, we are going to view clips from two different episodes that complicate who the enemy is.

(a) The OS episode “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield,” raises powerful questions about racism:

- **Screen share (with audio)** OS “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8ysHnbDQ50> (4:17 min)

Questions for Discussion:

- What is this episode trying to say about being “white” and “black”?
- “Look at me. Look at me,” says commissioner Bele to Spock. What determines how we will see one another? What determines what is visible to us about “the other”?
- Was it hard to tell Lokai and Bele a part? Do you agree with Spock that their hate was blinding them, keeping them from realizing the ways they are connected?

(b) In the NG episode “The Drumhead,” fear and suspicion rule the actions of investigators after an incident with a Romulan spy. Guilt by association and an over-zealous attempt to find the enemy lead to a Federation version of McCarthyism. (McCarthyism is the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence.)

- **Screen share (with audio)** NG “The Drumhead”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADEDLoLY3AY> (2:21 min) then

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eahs1HgtdcU> (STOP at 1:45 min)

Questions for Discussion:

- Does this remind you of any current or historical events? Which ones?
- Why do you think it is so easy for fear and suspicion to spread?
- What would you do to prevent or counteract these kind of actions?

7. Conflict Transformation (15 minutes)

Teacher summarizes: Neither conflicts were truly resolved by the end of the episodes. In “The Drumhead,” the conflict didn’t go away, but was transformed because the crew of the Enterprise, especially Mr. Worf, was changed by the experience. Considering that when we treat others as our “enemies,” our own fear, anger, guilt, etc. can turn **us** into the enemy, what are other ways we can approach conflict?

Questions for Discussion:

- Do you think it is possible to reach across differences and have each party maintain their own values and perspectives? Do you value the perspective of “the other”? Do you trust your own perspective?
- As Spock says, if “change is the essential process of all existence,” is it okay to try and make someone change if we believe we are right? How do you respond to someone trying to change your mind? What distinguishes being challenged to think about the world in an unfamiliar way from being pressured to believe or do something you don’t agree with?
- How would you like to practice conflict in the future?

8. **Announcement:** We don’t have RE for the next two weeks – have a wonderful Passover and/or Easter holiday and Spring Break!

9. **Extinguish the chalice**, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

10. **Leave zoom breakout classroom:** wait until all youth have left, click “Leave” then “Leave Meeting.”

Viewing clips, in order of sequence:

- OS “Let That Be Your Last Battlefield”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n8ysHnbDQ50> (4:17 min)
- NG “The Drumhead”:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEDLoLY3AY> (2:21 min) ;
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eahs1H9tdcU> (STOP at 1:45 min)