2021 MYWA Curriculum Theme Outline

**Theme:** Disturbing the Peace

**Section 1:** Jesus: The Revolutionary

* Jesus: The Social Revolutionary
  + Jesus cares about social injustice, racial and gender inequities, and the systematic oppression of the poor. We are called to be prophetic, meaning truth-tellers, which means standing up for the injustices in this world.
  + Scripture: Matthew 25:41-46
    - When you serve those in your community who are in need, you are doing the will and work of our Savior
* Jesus: The Political Revolutionary
  + Dr. Obery Hendricks puts it this way, “To say that Jesus was a political revolutionary is to say that the message he proclaimed not only called for a change in individual hearts but also demand its sweeping and comprehensive change in the political, social, and economic structures in his setting in life: colonized Israel.”
  + Scripture: Luke 4:18-19
    - This passage is often regarded as Jesus’ Inaugural address, where He reads from the prophet Isaiah’s scroll and states plainly what He came down on Earth to do which is:
      * To proclaim good news to the poor
        + This includes both the poor in spirit and the physically poor

It’s important to mention that only 5% of the Jews (Jesus’ people) living in Rome were considered middle or upper class

Nearly 95% would be seen as living well below the poverty line. Many of them weren’t just poor, they were in debt, and some were even slaves to Roman citizens as a result of taking out loans that they couldn’t payback

* + - * Proclaim freedom for prisoners
        + This refers to those literally in prisons at that time as well as those financially and mentally imprisoned by the Roman government and Jewish priests
      * Recovery of sight for the blind
        + We know Jesus literally restores the sight as one of the miracles He performed (Mark 8:22-24), but He also restored spiritual sight by showing people a new way of living (an example of this is with Nicodemus in John 3:1-21)
      * Set the oppressed free
        + Jesus is referencing more than 90% of the Jews at this time because they were living under Roman oppression and were being exploited on a daily basis
    - All the things He mentions are political in nature
      * To proclaim good news to the poor during a time of political unrest was a political statement
      * To proclaim physical, financial, and mental freedom of His people was a political statement in going up against a government built on taxation that kept the poor desolate and dependent upon the Roman government and the rich wealthy and able to profit off the demise of the Jews
      * To perform physical and spiritual miracles in the face of a government that adhered to the Sabbath (a collective day of rest) was another political statement against the Roman government to say that to do good and save a life, which is the way of the Father, should always take precedence over traditions and customs (Mark 3:1-6)
      * To set the oppressed free was a political statement

**Section 2:** Jesus: The Peace-MAKER

* To be a peacemaker is a call to action. It is a call to get up and do. If God sent Jesus as our example on how we should act and live, He didn't sit by idly when He saw injustice taking place. He stood up, spoke out, and took action.
* Being a peacemaker means using your voice, your platform, and your privilege to make this world better for those who are less fortunate.
  + Using your voice includes speaking up on social media, protesting, standing up to a bully at school, speaking up for those who are often overlooked, etc.
  + Using your platform means using your area of influence
    - All of you have influence. You have friends, other youth, your coworkers, and even adults who may look up to you.
    - When you recognize you have influence, you recognize that you also have the power to create change
  + Privilege includes the resources that you have available to you. Leverage your privilege to help those who are less fortunate. Examples include:
    - Money
    - Connections to people in power
    - Knowledge about a particular subject matter
* There is a difference between being a peace-MAKER and a peacekeeper
  + Peace-MAKERS are those who are willing to resolve inner and outer issues in order to establish peace with others and within themselves
    - Peacemaking WILL require engaging in conflict to bring resolution to a situation
  + Peacekeepers avoid conflict with the hope of maintaining peace
    - They prefer to “play it safe” to keep others happy
    - They avoid rocking the boat and are willing to sacrifice their inner peace to maintain the facade of peace with others
  + As Christians, we are called to peace-MAKERS and not peacekeepers
* Scripture: Matthew 5:9
  + As our example, Jesus calls us to be like Him, which is to be a peace-MAKER
  + Jesus made peace between God and man and between different groups of people. But it wasn’t without conflict
    - Jesus challenged the beliefs of prominent religious leaders (Pharisees and Sadducees), openly confronted sin, raised poignant questions that exposed the hearts of his disciples, and preached while facing persecution
  + By being a peace-MAKER, Jesus was able to set people free, show them the one and only true Way of life, and ultimately save their lives
  + Being a peace-MAKER means we will face moments of conflict and confrontation in the name of doing what is right. It means we will be asked to be honest during tense and difficult times. It means we may have to speak up instead of simply turning a blind eye when we see wrongdoing taking place.

**Section 3:** Created for a Purpose

* God created us in His image and likeness and, just like God looked out into the world and saw the issues and problems that needed to be fixed (refer to Genesis 1 and 2), He has instilled in us the ability to do the same.
* Each of us is created to solve a problem in this world. No matter how big or small, God created you to be a blessing and an answer to an issue plaguing this world.
* Know that your existence is not a mistake. You were created on purpose, for a purpose.
* Questions to consider while figuring out the work that God is calling you to do?
  + What are your skills, gifts, and/or talents?
  + Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon says that you have to “do the work your soul must have.” What issues/topics are you deeply passionate about?
  + What unique experiences have you had in life that you think might disqualify you, that could actually be used to help someone else?
* Scriptures: Jeremiah 29:11 and Esther 4:14

**Section 4:** Be the Change!

* Always remember that change begins with you!
* Being young doesn’t mean your voice doesn’t matter. Use your platform (on social media as an influencer, in school, with your friends (in your peer groups), with your sports teams, etc.) to make this world a better place.
* Biblical examples of people who made a change:
  + Rahab used her occupation (even though unfavorable) to save her family (Joshua 2)
  + Esther used her influence to save her people (Esther 4:12-14)
  + David used a slingshot and a rock to save his people from the Philistines ( 1 Samuel 17)