



Thematic Healing Ideas and Plans for Teachers

The following are seven different themes that can be used in Middle and/or High School classrooms to engage students in various subjects. Literature, Music, History, Visual Art, Science, Math and Activism can all be addressed by using the Registry. This site can provide material to draw from, create from, and explore.

These Unit plans are constructed to make use of the site, to encourage ways of creating lessons that are interdisciplinary, and interactive, while still meeting standards.

So often *teaching from a theme* can in itself be inclusive and deep as opposed to teaching separate units on “black poets” African American music”. In this way we do not “other” a culture, race or community, but rather weave them into the inclusive world we want to create in our classrooms while still emphasizing the importance of their unique identity.

As you will see, the Registry provides a natural resource into many themes that connect to student lives, concerns and passions.

Note: You can pick or choose among the suggestions for each Thematic Unit. It could be an activity from the Unit that takes one day; or you may want to pick and choose what activities and lessons you want to do that amount to one week of exploration and instruction. The Registry is ideal in its flexibility. These Units aim to be flexible as well.



MDE Social Emotional Goals—All Are Part of Every Unit Plan for the Registry

Self-control of feelings and behavior
Shared use of space and materials
Identify of self in relations to others
Social and emotional understanding
Relationships and social interactions with familiar adults
Relationships and social interactions
Conflict negotiation
Responsible conduct as a group member

Standards Addressed in the Unit: Healing

Standards addressed in this unit include

Citizenship and Government --Civic Skills, 8.1, 9.1
Geography—9.3,
Historical Thinking Skills—9.
United State History—Indigenous and Slave labor-9.4.4.16.5
United States History—Slaves struggle for rights-9.4.4.19.4
United States History—Jim Crow –racism 9.4.4.20.5

Language Arts:

Conventions of English when writing or speaking: 6.11.1.1
Consulting Reference Materials 6.11..44
Evaluate Content in Diverse Media 6.5.77
Write Narratives and Other Creative Texts—7.7.3.3- 12th grade
Prepare for and Participate in range of conversations –7.9.1.1- grade 12
Communicate using traditional or digital multimedia formats—7.9.8.8
Write Narratives and other Creative Texts—9.7.3.3



Theme: Healing/Forgiveness

This unit will explore how we recover, how we heal after a traumatic or disturbing event, and how we forgive one another after words are spoken, after we feel hurt, or after we discover something that changes us, disturbs us. How do we go on, endure, after trauma? How do we maintain a friendship after being betrayed or hurt by someone we care about? These are questions that young people often have yet are afraid to voice or express. What heals us—is it music or ritual, or a place where we go to recover? What helps us recover and what makes us find joy and laugh again? This unit will help students explore the lives of those who have had courage to forgive and go on, and what enabled them to do this throughout history as well as now, in our current climate.

Intersections: This unit includes disciplines of music, science, art, literature, history.

Age Range: Grades 9-12

Goal: Students will explore how cultures create healing ceremonies, how some cultures find ways to express forgiveness. It will also explore the idea of reparations: after a great wrong has been done to a people, how can they be compensated for their loss. Reparations is one form of healing: it is the giving back, knowing that nothing can replace what is lost. The unit will also ask students to research and find examples from history that show how a nation recovered from great loss, healed, and went on. Using the Registry, it will also explore how different people healed. Using poems and videos from African Americans around this theme, the unit will give students a way of understanding history on a more personal and meaningful level. Ultimately, given the age of the student, a final project involving art, music, poetry or history, working in a collaborative group, will be presented to the class.

Materials: Paper/pen/pencil. Way to play music. Art supplies such as colored pencils, markers, large sheets of paper. Computer time for research.

Introducing the unit;

Step 1: Ask students to think of times when they hurt someone. Not necessarily physically, rather emotionally. Tell them to write down, for their own use, not anyone else's, a list of those times, or one time in particular when they hurt another person.

Step 2: Next, ask students to make a list of times they were hurt by someone else. This can be by an adult and can be physical or emotional. It can be when they were disrespected or made fun of or yelled at. This also is a private list that can be destroyed after the exercise.



Ask the class to create a list together for each experience. In the first list, after hurting someone, did they feel guilt, anger, fear, satisfaction? In the second list, times they were hurt by another did they feel anger, sadness, indifference, anxiety.

Step 3: Finally, ask students what it took that allowed them to heal from the incident: walking away? Writing a note? Asking for dialogue? Writing a poem, or song or story.

Step 4: Show the students this definition for healing:” healing: to make healthy, whole, or sound; restore to health; free from ailment. to bring to an end or conclusion, as conflicts between people or groups, usually with the strong implication of restoring former amity; settle; reconcile: They tried to *heal* the rift between them but were unsuccessful.”

Synonyms:

	alleviate, ease, assuage, palliate, relieve, help, lessen, mitigate, attenuate, allay
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Ask students to choose one word from the above synonyms for healing. Have them look up the definition, use it in a sentence and write a one paragraph description of how this word could apply to their own life. If they chose “palliate” ask them to describe an experience where their anger or grief or sadness was made easier to survive, to endure.

Students can read these paragraphs to each other if they want, in pairs.

Activities

1. Ask students to read the entry in the Registry about [Frederick Douglass](#).

From their reading, ask them to explore the life of this man further, through his own words or biographies of Frederick Douglass. This can be one choice for a research project, performance piece, poetry project.

2. Ask students to read Frederick Douglass’ speech on [“Why Negroes do not celebrate the 4th of July”](#).

Ask students to focus on the last paragraphs of this speech. Reading the whole speech is necessary to understand the impact of the last, hopeful language in Douglass’ talk.

How does Douglass show that even considering slavery, a people can survive and heal and go on? Are there other figures in history that are able to do this,



despite their anger or grief or circumstances? Discuss, asking for examples, from history or current events.

3. Ask students to Explore the Registry by subject. They should click on [Activist/Abolitionist on the menu](#). They can read around in this category, eventually choosing a person they would like to focus on, know more about. Emphasize the idea of *resiliency*, that many people throughout history have been resilient, have found healing in action. Each student can then present to others what they have found while exploring this category.

4. [Healing Through Music](#): Ask students to read Elizabeth Alexander's poem [Praise Song For The Day](#) from the Registry. In it she mentions music.

Ask them to watch a series of videos about Anton Armstrong, choral director and composer by typing his name in the search function.

Have students read the poem [Soul by D. I. Graham](#) by Graham about music and how it was a part of African American lives. Let them explore poems about music in the Registry. The variety of kinds of music in the history of African American lives was a way of healing for many, and now for all of us. This combined with rituals. As part of religion, or public events, can provide a respite from what is difficult.

Ask students: How does music work in your own life? Do you play an instrument, sing, dance, party? Write a song or poem or essay about music. Any aspect will do for this...

5. Search for *Seitu Jones* in the Registry. Watch the four videos with this artist. This is an African American who has devoted his life to visual art. Have students look on the internet and in the Registry for African American Artists. How has art helped one of these artists heal from the difficult times he or she has faced due to racism?

In particular ask students to read about [Charles White](#) on the Registry.

He mentions that art was therapeutic for him, allowed him to express what he felt on paper.

Discussion questions: What do you do that allows you to heal, to create positive energy in the world you live in? Make a list of ways: through art, music, talking to friends. Share these with the class.

6. Have students Work in groups of 3-5.

Give the following instructions to the groups: Think about a situation where a person is hurt, has experienced pain or trauma. This can be a person in history



that you research, in your personal life or created by you. Use the Registry to look for people who have achieved despite their situation. Compose a play, a song, a long poem, that you can present to the class showing the situation and how the main character, or historical figure heals from it, does he or she become a trumpeter, a poet, a saxophone player, politician, a sculptor, or a teacher, writer, doctor, scientist, athlete? The list is endless. _

7. Reparations: A dictionary definition of reparations is: *noun*: the making of amends for a wrong one has done, by paying money to or otherwise helping those who have been wronged. Ex. "the courts required a convicted offender to **make financial reparation to** his victim."

Other similar words, or synonyms for reparations are amends, redress, compensation, recompense, repayment, atonement. "the victims are seeking reparations"

Many have suggested that there be some form of reparations for whole groups of people who were wronged, enslaved, murdered, because of their race, religion, sexual orientation.

An example is found in the Registry: [Florida Apologizes for Slavery](#)

As you can see from this article, Florida debated this idea and made an apology to African Americans.

Read and research the idea of reparations. Present to the class, one form of reparations: to crime victims, to groups, to persons injured, to those whom business or a company has hurt.

Is there a way to provide reparations for the damage of climate change?

This project can expand to become as a group social action project resulting in a plan, letter, action to bring about reparations, compensation, repayment. It can be done as a play, art project, community action project. This activity involves research, writing, presenting, planning, cooperative activities and can even fulfill a service learning requirement. Interviewing elders, victims, scientists, and other experts can also be part of this learning package. It can take a month, or a year to work on, using math, science, history, the arts in its final form.