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Charles Redd Center Teaching Western History Award for K-12 Teachers

Unit Plan

Homeboy Industries: A Path to Rehabilitation in Los Angeles

LESSON TITLE: Homeboy Industries: A Path to Rehabilitation in Los Angeles	
DURATION, CLASS, GRADE LEVEL, NUMBER OF STUDENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Duration: 3-4 weeks (est.)● Class: Cross-curricular unit for 11th Grade Humanities courses in History, Religion or Literature● Grade Level: 11● Number of Students: 20-25
LOCATION	La Reina High School, Thousand Oaks, California
KEY VOCABULARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Homeboy Industries: Founded officially in 2001 and located in Los Angeles, this organization is “one of the largest, most comprehensive and most successful gang intervention, rehabilitation and re-entry programs in the country” (www.homeboyindustries.org).● Homies: a slang term found in American urban culture; a shortened phrase of the Mexican slang word "homeboy" which became prevalent among Latino and Chicano youth in the United States beginning in the 1960s. Fr. Greg Boyle uses the terms “homies,” “homegirl,” and “homeboy” throughout his book, <i>Tattoos on the Heart</i>.● Kinship: Fr. Greg Boyle defines kinship as “not serving the other, but being one with the other” (<i>Tattoos on the Heart</i> 188). By addressing the homies as family, Boyle proves that he himself is truly one with them.● Social Location: one’s place in society; includes factors such as one’s religious identity, sexual and gender identity, economic status, ethnicity, age, personal story, place of residence, education, etc.● Rehabilitation: a process in which a person’s health and life is restored to normalcy, in particular a process in which formerly incarcerated men and women redirect their lives through an array of different support programs● Urban West: Carl Abbott claims that “polyglot cities, fighting for natural resources in a landscape of scarcity, shaped the landscape and mindset of the West” (Montoya 345). Modern western historiography emphasizes the “complexity, discord and mixture” found within the west, making Los Angeles a great model of an American urban, western city (Montoya 347-8).
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Computer/laptop● Projector

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Projection screen ● Individual student copies of <i>Tattoos on the Heart</i> by Fr. Greg Boyle ● Access to student i-pads ● Posters or used cardboard ● Creative materials such as magazines, photographs, markers, paint, etc.
ENDURING UNDERSTANDING (BIG IDEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what the poor have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it.” – Fr. Greg Boyle
ESSENTIAL QUESTION/S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What responsibility do we have as humans to uphold the dignity of a marginalized group in society? ● How do our perceptions of people and places, in particular our perceptions of Los Angeles, an urban city in the American West, and people affiliated with gangs, create reality and impact the way in which we treat and understand the “other”? ● How does discrimination and dehumanization, specifically of gang members in Los Angeles, affect a marginalized population? ● Do people who have been branded criminals deserve a second chance? Why or why not? ● How can we open and/or change our perceptions of different people and places?
LEARNING OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will gain an understanding of the complexity of the modern day urban West as well as critique this understanding. ● Students will gain a historical overview and understanding of gang life in Los Angeles. ● Students will be able to conduct research on contemporary community issues found within the urban, western city of Los Angeles and present their findings with the entire class as well as use social media to share their knowledge and advocacy with a wider audience. ● Students will examine Fr. Greg Boyle’s <i>Tattoos on the Heart</i> and engage critically in a seminar style discussion. ● Students will be able to analyze and create a visual and reflective representation of the themes addressed in Boyle’s <i>Tattoos on the Heart</i>.
STANDARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Common Core <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reading History: Key Ideas and Details (RH.11-12.1, 12.2, 12.3) ○ Reading History: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (RH.11-12.7) ○ Writing History: Production and Distribution of Writing (WHST.11-12.4, 12.6) ○ Writing History: Research to Build and Present Knowledge (WHST.11-12.9)

BACKGROUND

The teacher needs to have an understanding of the complexity of the urban West using Los Angeles as a prime example of a modern western city, as conveyed by scholar Maria Montoya. To understand the current demographics of Los Angeles, in particular the community that Fr. Greg Boyle serves, it is important to have a historical background of Los Angeles as a global city.

In 1781, a group of Spanish, Mexican, Asian, Black, Mestizo and mixed-race leaders establish El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciuncula. This became the City of Los Angeles in 1850; a western city of diverse people and cultures.

In 1943, the Zoot Suit Riots break out as a series of attacks by white American military men against minorities, predominantly Mexican American youth, wearing baggy pants and long-tailed coats. During the 1940s, the Ku Klux Klan also emerged in Los Angeles. The first Black and Latino gangs emerged in response to these dangerous, white supremacist gangs. Initially, these gangs acted as protection for Black and Latino neighborhoods. Yet, incidents such as the Zoot Suit Riots led to a higher degree of organized gangs.

By 1965, demographics have changed drastically throughout Los Angeles. The black population goes from 75,000 in 1940 to 650,000 in 1965. An arrest in Watts lead to riots that result in 34 dead, 1,000 wounded and 40 million in property damage. The McCone Commission's Report released that the riots had been caused by systemic social problems (i.e. poverty, racial discrimination, etc.). A similar incident occurred in 1992 where riots broke out after the jury found LAPD officers responsible for beating Rodney King not guilty.

The rise and use of crack cocaine in impoverished communities during the 1980s as well as continued systemic social problems lead to some of the highest homicide rates ever experienced in Los Angeles history due to an all-time high of gang violence in the early 1990s. After the LA Riots of 1992 there was a major drop in homicides. Much of this has to do with the gang truce that was established among the projects in Watts.

Today, gang-related activities, especially homicides, are at an all-time low. Organizations like Homeboy Industries have helped rehabilitate former gang members and incarcerated people, helping them to become contributing members of society.

This historical background of Los Angeles gives some context for the development of gangs and the environment in which they thrive. This background will set the stage for diving into the complexities and grit of gang culture and the efforts done by Homeboy Industries to rehabilitate as well as offer a dignified and redemptive future for former gang members in Los Angeles.

For the religion portion of the lesson plan, the teacher needs to have an understanding of the Catholic Social Teaching principles – *Dignity of the Human*

Person. Call to Family, Community and Participation. Rights and Responsibilities. Preferential Option for and with People who are Poor. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. Solidarity. Care for God's Creation. – and their relevance to social justice and the treatment of former gang members in Los Angeles. These principles are evident within Fr. Greg Boyle's book, *Tattoos on the Heart*. The teacher should be able to guide students in a thoughtful, reflective and analytical socratic seminar with this particular book.

Prior to this lesson, students should have an understanding of "social location" (*see vocabulary above*). Students will be building off of previous discussions on ethical dilemmas that deal with social problems in our world; now they will see how one tackles ethical dilemmas while upholding human dignity in their own Los Angeles backyard.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

**Into – (purpose, establishing context, making connections)
Days 1-3: Exposure & Introduction to Unit**

Day 1

Show a series of photos by [Brandon Stanton](#) and [Ernest Wright](#) with no captions or background. *See examples of photographs below.*

- Questions to consider while examining photographs → Write notes in notebook/journal:
 - Describe your immediate reactions to the photos you see.
 - What do you notice in these images?
 - What can you infer from the photographs you see?
 - What can you not infer?
- Then look at the same photographs with their captions (from Humans of New York blog) or [transformation stories \(from Homeboy Industries website\)](#).
- .
- Questions to consider while examining photographs with captions → Write notes in notebook/journal:
 - Describe your immediate reactions to the captions you have read.
 - Do you notice something different in these images?
 - What can you infer from the photographs you see?
 - What can you not infer?
- Discuss findings in small groups then with the whole class.

Days 2-3

Information Gathering: in-class work:

- In groups of three, students will read the following four articles:
 - Student 1 will read Maria Montoya’s article, “From Homogeneity to Complexity: Understanding the Urban West”
 - Student 2 will read Michael Engh’s article, “At Home in the Heteropolis: Understanding Postmodern L.A.”
 - Student 3 will read two short LA Times articles: Brittny Mejia’s article, “After 30 Years of Helping Gang Members, Father Greg Boyle Is Slowing a Bit but Still Determined” and Hector Becerra’s article, “When Childhood Innocence and Gang Violence Lived Side by Side in Boyle Heights”
- These readings focus on the Urban West. As Montoya points out, Los Angeles has served as a model of an American and western city. Using google docs as a writing tool that will be turned in for completion points, each group will address the following, referencing each article at least once and citing evidence for their thoughts and analysis:
 - What do these readings teach us about urban spaces in the American West, in particular Los Angeles?
 - How do ideas about a place shape the culture and feel of a city (Montoya)? Is this problematic? If so, why? Explain.
 - What did the LA Times articles say about gang life in Los Angeles, Homeboy Industries and Fr. Greg Boyle? Give a brief summary.
 - Each group member prepare one interpretive question for our discussion.
- Discuss articles and responses in groups of six, then as a whole class. Turn in responses for completion points.

Through – (sequence, questioning, clarifying, analyzing, interpreting, discussion focus, etc.)

Days 4-12: Application, Personal Reflection and Critical Engagement

Days 4-12

Over the course of 8 to 10 days, students will read *Tattoos on the Heart* by Fr. Greg Boyle.

- Throughout this time, there will be at least 4 socratic seminars where students will prepare 2 compelling, interpretive questions that reference the text in order to aid in discussion.
- Students should keep this overarching question in their mind as they read this text: How do our perceptions of people and places, in particular our perceptions of Los Angeles -- an urban, western city -- and people affiliated with gangs, create reality and impact the way in which we treat and understand the “other”?

Day 5

Introduce individual, in-class, creative project:

- Directions: Choose a chapter in the book that resonated the most with you. Create a physical representation that captures and/or interprets the title as well as the content found within the chapter. These will be shared with your classmates after we are done reading and discussing Boyle's book. *See rubric below.*

Day 10

- Watch Fr. Greg Boyle's [Ted Talk](#)
 - In small groups, discuss Boyle's style and approach to sharing his stories about working with different homies. Do you find his storytelling effective? Does hearing and seeing Boyle talk add to the experience of reading his book? Why or why not? What is the ultimate take away from his talk? What is Boyle trying to teach his audience?

Days 11-13

- Work on individual projects in class and, if need be, finish for homework.
- Share and present with classmates.

Beyond – (application, synthesis, evaluation, etc.)

Days 14-20: Final Assessment in Unit

Research & Social Action Plan → Group Project & Presentation

See detailed instructions and rubrics below.

Days 14-15

Research a community issue/problem either in Los Angeles or on a more local level in your own city/town. Provide historical context.

- What? Why? When? How Where? Who?

Reference Catholic Social Teaching.

Days 16-17

Devise an action plan to address and/or solve this issue.

- Publish an aspect of your action plan onto social media. Track responses.

Days 18-19

Present findings to the class.

Day 20

Students will debrief through the use of a 3 2 1 exit slip. Students will list three things that they discovered from any part of the unit. Students will list two things

	they want to learn more about and one question that they might still have regarding any of the topics covered over the past four weeks. The teacher will then lead a class debriefing discussion.
EVALUATIONS (ASSESSMENT)	<p>Assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Small Group Written Response ● Socratic Seminar ● Creative Individual Project ● Research Group Project & Presentation
EXTENSIONS	Show the film, <i>Boyz in the Hood</i> , and have students write a reflective essay on their experience of watching the film and reading Boyle's book.

RESOURCES

Primary Sources:

Baker, Bob. "Deeply Rooted in L.A.: Chicano Gangs: A History of Violence." *Los Angeles Times*. *Los Angeles Times*, 11 Dec. 1988. http://articles.latimes.com/1988-12-11/news/mn-429_1_chicano-gang-members.

Becerra, Hector. "When Childhood Innocence and Gang Violence Lived Side by Side in Boyle Heights." *Los Angeles Times*, 12 May 2016. <http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-gang-history-20160512-story.html>.

Boyle, Greg. "Compassion and Kinship," (TEDxConejo, 2012) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ipR0kWt1Fkc>

Boyle, Greg. *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*. New York: Free Press, 2011.

Mejia, Brittny. "After 30 Years of Helping Gang Members, Father Greg Boyle Is Slowing a Bit but Still Determined." *Los Angeles Times*. *Los Angeles Times*, 4 Nov. 2015. Web. 19 July 2017. <http://www.latimes.com/local/great-reads/la-me-c1-father-boyle-20151104-story.html>.

Salai, Sean. "Saving Gang Members from the Street? Q&A with Father Greg Boyle, SJ." *America Magazine*, 31 Jan. 2017.

Secondary Sources:

Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. London: Verso, 2006. Print.

Engh, Michael E. "At Home in the Heteropolis: Understanding Postmodern L.A." *The American Historical Review* 105.5 (2000): 1676-682. Web.

Montoya, María E. "From Homogeneity to Complexity: Understanding the Urban West." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 42.3 (2011): 344-48.

Sides, Josh. "Straight into Compton: American Dreams, Urban Nightmares, and the Metamorphosis of a Black Suburb." *American Quarterly* 56.3 (2004): 583-605.

Examples of Photographs



Wright, Ernest. Portraits of Homies.

<http://ernestwrightiii.com/portraits-of-the-homies/jteg4c0hg5649pzm6q72615bpvuwix>



“My mom was a single mom and there were nine of us. All of the kids worked in the fields. I started when I was twelve. We picked cucumbers, apples, corn, strawberries, all of it. None of us went to school. Nobody cared-- if you move around a lot, the system loses track of you.”
Stanton, Brandon. Humans of New York: Inmate Stories, 2015.

<http://www.humansofnewyork.com/tagged/inmate-stories>

Individual Creative Project Directions & Rubric

PROCESS

1. Choose a chapter from the book, *Tattoos on the Heart*, that resonates the most with you.
2. Create a physical representation that creatively captures and/or interprets the title as well as the content found within the chapter. You may use posterboard, canvas or something tangible as your medium. If you would like to design something on a computer, you must print out your final project.
3. These creative pieces will be shared with your classmates after we are done reading and discussing Boyle's book.

Creative Project Rubric

	Advanced	Proficient	Minimal
Originality	-is new, unique, surprising; shows a personal touch -may successfully break rules and conventions, or use common materials or ideas in new, clever and surprising ways	-has some new ideas or improvements, but some ideas are predictable or conventional - may show a tentative attempt to step outside rules and conventions, or find new uses for common materials or ideas	-relies on existing models, ideas, or directions; it is not new or unique -follows rules and conventions; uses materials and ideas in typical ways
Content	-clearly and creatively references and reflects on one chapter from <i>Tattoos on the Heart</i>	-adequately references and reflects on one chapter from <i>Tattoos on the Heart</i>	-unclear what is being referenced or addressed -does not fully address one chapter in <i>Tattoos on the Heart</i>
Style	-is well-crafted, striking, designed with a distinct style but still appropriate for the purpose -combines different elements into a coherent whole	-has some interesting touches, but lacks a distinct style -has some elements that may be excessive or do not fit together well	-is safe, ordinary, made in a conventional style -has several elements that do not fit together; it is a mish-mash

**Research & Social Action Plan → Group Project & Presentation
Directions & Rubric**

PROCESS

1. Identify Problem/Issue

You will be assigned one of the following groups. If you think of a different topic that your group is interested in investigating, please check with me about it first.

1. Promotion of racist attitudes in media (music, movies, TV, news, etc.)
2. Institutionalized racism (inequalities in education, housing, employment, incarceration rates, etc.)
3. Poverty (cannot afford basic necessities)
4. Bullying (oppression from an individual to another individual or group to group)
5. Environmental Concern (caused by people; harm people)
6. Religious based discrimination (discrimination against certain religious traditions IE. Islamophobia)
7. Segregation (separation of groups based on race, class, economics, etc.)
8. Substance abuse (abuse of alcohol or drugs)

2. Explain how this is a problem in your community

How has this problem been true in your community? You must find research to support your conclusion. The research must be factual and not based on personal experience.

3. Investigate what has already been done to respond to this problem

What has been done to address this issue? Identify what you may have seen on TV, social media, etc. that attempted to raise awareness or somehow help the problem.

To what extent was this attempt successful? Evaluate the success of this attempt. Explain how it has been successful and how it has been ineffective. Explain how it could be more effective.

4. Reference Catholic Social Teaching Principle/s

What Catholic Social Teaching principles are you addressing with regards to this issue? Why? Dignity of the Human Person. Call to Family, Community and Participation. Rights and

Responsibilities. Preferential Option for and with People who are Poor. Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. Solidarity. Care for God's Creation.

5. Develop an actionable response to this problem

How can you address the issue? How can you raise awareness? How can you encourage people to be outspoken about these issues? What could possibly help this problem be solved within your community?

This is your group's response to the issue you were investigating. You must create some kind of actionable response to the social issue. Some ideas could include a powerful meme, starting a public campaign, a PSA (public service announcement), creating a community organization, writing a song, etc... If you think of something not on this list, please check in with me.

Category	A	B	C	D
Explanation and Research	The group presents at least <u>two</u> pieces of research that prove why the topic is a community problem, <u>giving source information</u> for both. Websites like about.com, ask.com, and Wikipedia are <u>avoided</u> .	The group presents at least <u>one</u> piece of research that proves why the topic is a community problem, <u>giving source information</u> . Websites like about.com, ask.com, and Wikipedia are <u>avoided</u> .	The group presents at least <u>two</u> pieces of research that prove why the topic is a community problem, but <u>no source information</u> is given.	The group presents at least <u>one</u> piece of research that proves why the topic is a community problem, but <u>no source information</u> is given.
Investigation	The group presents a <u>thorough</u> investigation, including at least <u>three</u> ways that the particular issue has been addressed with an <u>explanation</u> of what they were, their <u>effectiveness</u> , and their <u>shortcomings</u> .	The group presents at least <u>two</u> ways that their particular issue has been addressed with an <u>explanation</u> of what they were, their <u>effectiveness</u> , and their <u>shortcomings</u> .	The group presents at least <u>one</u> way that their particular issue has been addressed with an <u>explanation</u> of what it was, its effectiveness, and its shortcomings.	The group presents <u>one</u> or <u>more</u> ways that the issue has been addressed, but they <u>may not explain</u> and analyze their significance.
Your Action Plan	The action plan specifically <u>addresses the problem</u> the group investigated. It is <u>powerful</u> , it has the <u>potential</u> to make change, and it is <u>ready to be presented</u> to the public. The presenters <u>specifically explain how their plan could be helpful</u> in the community.	The action plan <u>addresses the problem</u> the group investigated. It has the <u>potential</u> to make change, and it is <u>ready to be presented</u> to the public. The presenters <u>explain how their plan could be helpful</u> in the community.	The action plan <u>mostly addresses the problem</u> the group investigated. It <u>may not be as effective</u> , and it <u>may not be ready</u> to present to the public. The presenters give a <u>vague explanation</u> of how the plan could be helpful within the community.	The action plan <u>somewhat addresses the problem</u> the group investigated. It is <u>not really effective or ready to present</u> to the public. The presenters <u>may not explain</u> how the plan could be helpful within the community.
Presentation	<u>All</u> people in the group present. Presenters speak with <u>confidence</u> , in a presentation <u>volume, enunciating</u> their words. The	<u>Most</u> people in the group present. The presenters are <u>mostly confident, loud enough</u> for the class to hear and mostly	<u>Some</u> people in the group present. The presenters are <u>lacking somewhat in confidence</u> , may be slightly <u>hard to hear</u> ,	<u>One</u> person in the group presents. The presenters are <u>quiet, difficult to understand</u> , and the presentation is <u>unengaging</u> .

	presentation is <u>lively</u> and <u>engaging</u> .	<u>understandable</u> . The presentation is <u>mostly engaging</u> .	and the presentation is <u>less engaging</u> .	
Final Score				

Group Roles and Responsibilities

Researcher: This person is in charge of Step 2 of the process—he or she must find ways in which the social problem that the group was assigned is a real problem within his/her community. The researcher must find **two pieces of information** (from credible sources).

Student Name: _____

Investigator: This person is in charge of Step 3 of the process; he/she **must identify three ways** that your group's social problem has been addressed already.

Student Name: _____

Social Activist: This student is in charge of Step 4 of the process; he/she must develop a plan that responds to the social issue. **This plan must be something that can be published on social media**—it can be a speech that is recorded and posted, it can be a serious meme, it can be anything that addresses the problem and is publishable on social media.

Student Name: _____

Leader: This person is in charge of the final product, making sure student presentations are complete. This person makes sure that the other team members are on task and that the team is following the guidelines listed on the process page and the rubric. Furthermore, this person assumes the role of any missing member and fills in wherever needed.

Student Name: _____

TASK CHECKLIST

Before you get started...

- Assign group roles and responsibilities.

Research

- Conduct your research. Examine how your particular topic has been a problem within your community. Find two pieces of research to support this conclusion. Cite in bibliography. *Please be careful when selecting your research. You should avoid websites such as Wikipedia, ask.com, answers.com, etc.*
- Explain how the research demonstrates the problem within your community.

Investigation

- Identify what has been done already to respond to/raise awareness of/assuage this problem. This could be a public service announcement, an editorial within the newspaper, a peaceful protest, a community outreach organization, etc.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the solutions you identified above. Discuss how they have helped and how they have fallen short.

Your Action Plan

- Decide on what you and your group will do to address the problem. It could be a public service announcement, a community advertisement, a meme, a community event, etc.
- Explain how this action plan could be helpful in addressing the problem.

The Presentation

- Decide on your method of presentation: Prezi, PowerPoint, etc.
- Decide who will present on what.

What social media platform did you use?

Instagram Facebook Twitter Other: _____

What kind of response did you get?

Likes: _____

Reactions: _____

Re-shares: _____

Comments:

What do you think you accomplished by sharing your social action plan?

Peer Review Form: Social Action Presentation

Name: _____

1. Promotion of racist attitudes in media

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____

2. Institutionalized racism

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____

3. Poverty

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____

4. Bullying

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____

5. Environmental Concern

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____

6. Religious based discrimination

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____

7. Segregation

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____

8. Substance abuse

How effective is the action plan?

Very Somewhat Slightly Ineffective

Is this something you would post on social media? Explain why or why not.

Yes _____

No _____