

Lesson Plans

# NEA Human and Civil Rights Awards Program

## Lessons Learned from NEA's Social Justice Advocates

### JERRY GORE

Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award



### Lesson At-A-Glance

- ▶ **Opening the Lesson:**  
Learning From the Past
- ▶ **Leading the Lesson:** Role Play: Helping Others
- ▶ **Closing the Lesson:**  
A Word About Jerry Gore

### Objective(s)

- ▶ Students will be able to understand how helping others feels.
- ▶ Students will be able to understand how being helped feels.
- ▶ Students will be able to learn how Jerry Gore has helped us to understand the past.

### Materials/Preparation

- ▶ Whiteboard
- ▶ Handout 1: Word Cards for Jerry Gore, Underground Railroad, path, secret, museum tour
- ▶ Handout 2: Phrase Cards: If I Help, When I'm Helped
- ▶ Handout 3: Role Play Scenario Cards
- ▶ Handout 4: Jerry Gore Word Bubble
- ▶ Prior to teaching the lesson familiarize yourself with Jerry Gore's background by reading the Lesson Information and Background and visiting [freedomundergroundrailroad.com](http://freedomundergroundrailroad.com)

### Suggested Grouping Structures

Whole group discussion, small group activity, and independent activity

**Estimated total lesson time:** 40 minutes

### Opening the Lesson (5 minutes)

#### Learning From the Past

1. **Ask** students to think of a time when someone helped them do something they were having difficulty doing on their own.
2. **Ask** them why they think that person would take time to help them. (Prompt: They cared about them; they wanted to be nice; they know how to help; they realized help was needed).
3. **Ask** if they ever heard anyone say, "Don't do what I did", and then tell about a mistake they made. Explain that we can learn from what has happened to others, so that we can do things differently.
4. **Explain** that today's lesson is about a person who also cares about others and wants us to learn from the past. Say, "He helps people think about and understand that in the past in our country, there have been people that were treated very unjustly. The people were denied freedom and basic rights of life." Take a moment to discuss what "freedom" means. Ask the class to name some of the freedoms we have today in the United States of America. Have a few volunteers share and add on to their list as needed to reinforce the meaning of freedom.
5. **Explain** that during our nation's past, particularly in the 1800's America was a different place and freedom was not equal for everyone (as needed, help students understand what the "past means" and how long ago the 1800's time period is). Say, "People were treated unfairly, unjustly, and inhumanely because they were black. During this time period there was slavery in parts of the United States. If a person was a "Slave", this meant he or she was "owned"

like property by another person and did not have their freedom. Their freedom was taken from them when they were forced to be slaves. Slavery is now illegal and has long since been abolished in the United States and around the world. In the United States before slavery became illegal, slaves found a way to take their freedom back by bravely escaping to places (other countries and other states) where slavery was not allowed. One way a slave escaped was by something called the Underground Railroad, which wasn't actually a railroad at all.

6. **Tell** the class that the person you were talking about who wants to help people learn from the past and show caring toward others by keeping the story of the slaves and the Underground Railroad in our minds, is Jerry Gore.
7. **Put** the Jerry Gore word card on the board and ask for a volunteer to say his name. Tell the class that nine members of Jerry Gore's family including his great-great grandfather, Addison White, were slaves who fled to freedom through the "Underground Railroad." Mr. Gore advocates for social justice and freedom for all people today in honor of his ancestors. Say, "We have to understand the past to learn from it. His life's work has been to help others understand the past, through education."

### Leading the Lesson (25 minutes)

#### Role Play: Helping Others

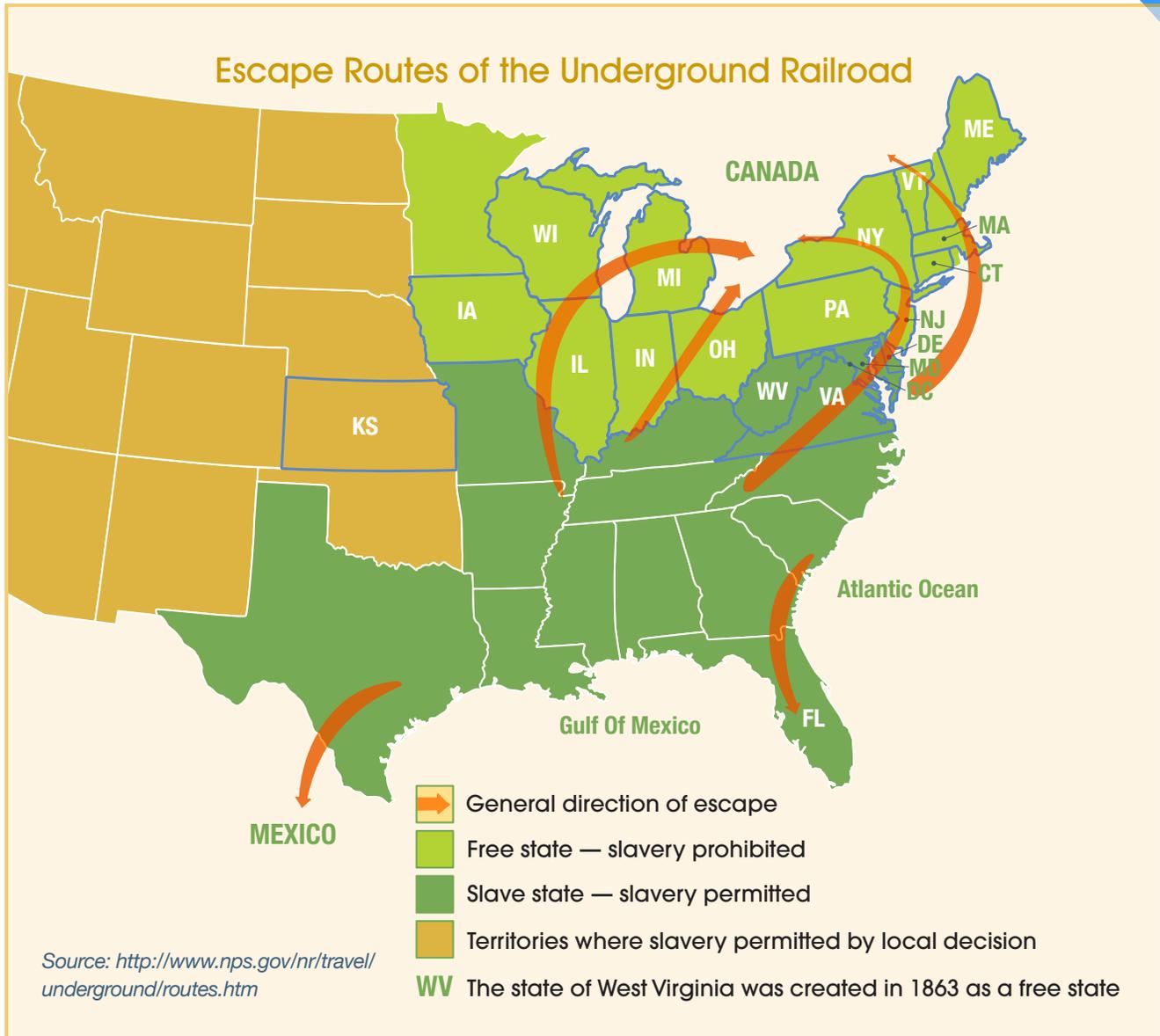
8. **Tell** the class that for this lesson, "Underground" means "in secret" and add the word cards to the board. Continue explaining that people who were being treated badly weren't free to leave. They had to find a way to get to a safe place. The term Underground

*Leading the Lesson continued*

Railroad was used to identify the paths they secretly used to get far away to safety. One of the reasons that the Underground Railroad was used by slaves as a way to escape to find freedom, is that there were people along the underground railroad that wanted to help them along the way. Slaves had to travel hundreds of miles on these paths to reach freedom. They needed food, water, shelter, and at times medical care. Many people, of all races, including people who used to be slaves themselves and black people living in states where slavery was illegal, helped slaves along the secret paths.

To help students understand the concept of slavery, consider reading them a children's story about the life of a slave. *Minty* by Alan Schroeder and Jerry Pinkney is a powerful story about the life of a child in slavery.

9. **Ask**, "If you have a problem and need to solve it, is it easier to do it alone or to ask for help?" Listen to the responses. Tell the students that lots of people helped the slaves who were trying to get to a safe place.
10. **Tell** the class they are going to do an activity with role playing. Ask what that means. (Prompt: to act out something like it is really happening).
11. **Select** a volunteer from the class to read a situation card silently. (i.e., You are trying to walk across an icy sidewalk, but you start to fall.) Direct that student to act it out while talking out loud. "Oh my this sidewalk is slippery." (Act like he/she is slipping). "Oh no! I don't think I can walk across this."
12. **Ask**, "What would you do if you saw this happening?" Call on a volunteer to show what action he/she would take. (Prompt: Here, I can take your arm and help you get across the walk.)
13. **Repeat** this activity with other role-play cards.
14. **Ask** the class, how it feels to help someone. List words on whiteboard under "If I help".
15. **Ask** how it feels to be helped by someone. List words on whiteboard under "When I'm helped".
16. **Ask** the class if they think people long ago felt the same ways we do when they were helped. Listen to the responses (Prompt that because the slaves were in a bad situation, the help was even more important to them).
17. **Explain** that Jerry Gore set up a special place for people to go to which gives information about what happened and helps people understand it better. Ask what this kind of a place is called (Prompt: Museum). Explain to students that Mr. Gore's museum is a special kind of museum that includes tours led by Mr. Gore where people walk on a part of the what was once the path known as the Underground Railroad. Use a United States map to show students approximately where the Underground Railroad paths were and in particular the part that is toured with Mr. Gore's museum in Maysville Kentucky and the neighboring state of Ohio. You can also utilize the map to make a point about the approximate distance a slave would have traveled. Show an example of an equivalent distance on the map by referencing your present location. If you live in California, you might explain to students that slaves would have traveled by foot on the underground railroad as far as they would today if they walked from San Diego, CA to San Francisco, CA or even farther.
18. **Place** the "museum" word card on the board. Have students tell what museums they have visited, telling the class reasons it would be like or different than Mr. Gore's museum.



### Closing the Lesson (10 minutes)

#### A Word About Jerry Gore

19. **Explain** that Jerry Gore created a museum and the Freedom Tour to help others learn from the experiences of slaves and the story of the Underground Railroad. He did so because his great-great grandfather, Addison White, escaped to freedom on the Underground Railroad and did so with the help of others.

Give students Handout 4 and point out Jerry Gore's name in the center bubble.

20. **Direct** students to work in pairs to complete the word bubbles around Jerry Gore's name, selecting words on the board to describe him. Partners can help each other as needed.

21. **Write** the term "Social Justice" on the board. Ask students what they think Social Justice means. (Prompt the response: All members

*Closing the Lesson continued*

of a society should be treated equally and fairly). Discuss the notion that in our country and in the world there are many individuals and groups who advocate for social justice and human and civil rights causes. In some cases, these individuals may be doing their job, in some cases they may be volunteers, but in all cases they are leaders. (Activate prior knowledge as needed: Ask students to name some examples of social justice and human and civil rights causes.) There are many awards at the national and global level that recognize the efforts of these advocates.

22. **Tell** the class that Jerry Gore received an award from the National Education Association because of his consistent dedication and accomplishments in helping others. This award was given to him as a social justice leader and advocate.
23. **Ask** the class to think of some of the reasons that they receive awards at school. Call on a few students to share. Emphasize awards that are given for reasons similar to the award given to Mr. Gore and other social justice advocates (i.e., caring for others, standing up for others, speaking up against bullying).
24. **Direct** students to look at their own word bubbles about Jerry Gore. Have them share with their partner, one or two words on each of their bubbles that are the same as some of the words they would use to describe behaviors that are displayed by themselves and their classmates when they are recognized at school for helping others.
25. **Explain** to the class that the award Mr. Gore received is called the Carter G. Woodson Memorial Award. Carter G. Woodson was a scholar and historian who started Black History

Month. He is known as the father of Black history. Every year the National Education Association picks a person whose activities in Black affairs significantly impact education and the achievement of equal opportunity. Close the lesson by reminding students of the important lessons that we can learn about taking care of others from Jerry Gore, Carter G. Woodson, and many other leaders for social justice advocacy in our country both in the past and present, including from young people such as them. It is the hope of all of the grown ups in their lives that one day students their age will be able to learn about advocacy through hearing stories about them.

**Assessment Suggestion(s):**

- ▶ Class discussion response
- ▶ Teacher observation of Role Play Scenarios
- ▶ Word Bubble completion (Handout 5)

**Adaptations, Enrichment, Cross-curricular Opportunities**

- ▶ For older students, divide students into groups of four and have each group read and act out one card scenario for the role play activity.
- ▶ Have younger students draw pictures in the bubbles instead of words for the Jerry Gore Word Bubble activity.
- ▶ Have students listen to a story about the life of a slave and the Underground Railroad, such as Harriet Tubman, by Marion Dane Bauer.
- ▶ Have students sing the song, "What Can One Little Person Do?" found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uh0gAO09zOc>

**Jerry Gore**

**Underground Railroad**

**Path**

**Secret**

**Museum Tour**

If Help

When I'm Helped

You are trying to walk across an icy sidewalk, but you start to fall. Say out loud. "Oh my this sidewalk is slippery." (Act like he/she is slipping). "Oh no! I don't think I can walk across this."

You are walking in the hall and drop your book bag. Everything falls out of it all over the hallway.

You fall and hurt your knee. You don't think you can get up by yourself.

It is your first day in a new school. You walk down the hallway and are lost.

LESSON PLAN HANDOUT **3**

*Role Play Scenario Cards (continued)*

You are at recess and your nose starts to bleed.  
You feel scared.

You eat a cookie and start to feel sick. You think  
you might be allergic to something in it.

You drop your tray in the cafeteria. You feel like  
everyone is looking at you.

Your pet is sick. You are at recess and you keep  
thinking about it and you are feeling very sad.



LESSON PLAN HANDOUT **3**

*Role Play Scenario Cards (continued)*

You are getting ready to go home on the bus. You have too many things to take home to fit them all in your book bag. You aren't sure how to carry them all to the bus.

You fall asleep on the bus and have missed the place you are supposed to get off. You feel so scared.

You lost one of your mittens somewhere on the playground. They are brand new and you know your parents will not be happy if you don't find it.

