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Quickening of Compassion

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Using This Study Guide

We offer this study guide to help you explore the Quickening of Compassion Cards. Looking over the photographs, considering the compassion principles, and carrying out the suggested tasks lies at the heart of using the cards. This study guide has five sections that will be helpful.

First, in the ***Understanding Compassion*** section we offer some definitions on compassion. The idea of compassion cuts across many disciplines, including civics, ethics, religion, psychology, and sociology. Compassion has been one of the foundations of society and the ingredient lacking in the world's worst atrocities. Whether viewed as a great task for civilizations or the pursuit of individuals, compassion opens doors for greater exploration of our humanity.

Second, we offer ***Discussion Exercises*** that suggest ways to use the cards to promote compassion in yourself and others through conversation. Think of those exercises as opportunities for sharing with others, or if you are working alone, for self-contemplation.

Third, we offer ***Action Exercises*** that focus on the compassion tasks in the cards. We crafted the cards to inspire discussion and other actions that will enrich the world around you. We hope that completing the action steps will make your community, workplace, and home more compassionate and will inspire others to emulate you.

Fourth, we have memorialized some ***Common Themes*** represented in the cards, such as "Immigrants/Immigration to the United States" or "Civil Rights Pioneers and Trailblazers." Because the themes occur on several cards, your awareness of the themes will enhance your discussions and provide new insights.

Fifth, we offer ***Card Background Information and Questions***. The section contains historical information about each card and questions to consider. We have also supplied hyperlinks for further reading. The information gives a social and historical context for each card that should help round out your discussions and inspire you to know more about the people and historical events presented.

We are always interested to know how you have been using the Quickening of Compassion Cards. If you like, please tell us about your use of the cards by sending an email to info@beyonddiversity.org.

Understanding Compassion

Compassion is a personal commitment to alleviate the suffering of others. Compassion requires a willingness to observe injustice and the resolve not to turn away from the suffering it causes. Compassion also requires action to end injustice and suffering.

Of course, that is an impossibly great task for an individual. No one person can end human suffering or address all injustice. Nevertheless, compassion asks us to do what we can and to keep trying to make the world better. It asks us to embody attention, forgiveness, and understanding, especially when it is difficult to do so. Compassion is an invitation to erase divides that separate “you” from “others.”

Embracing the sometimes painful emotions that arise while observing the suffering of others is key to compassion. In her book, *Compassion: Listening to the Cries of the World*,¹ Christina Feldman states:

Something profound happens in your heart when you turn with kindness toward all the circumstances of pain you have previously repressed, dismissed, or fled from. There is a softening, an opening, a deepening capacity and willingness to understand sorrow and its cause.

Compassion also requires self-compassion, the ability to offer ourselves forgiveness and patience. This is not a self-indulgent practice. If we open ourselves with kindness to others, we must receive ourselves with kindness, too.

Beware of the barriers to compassion: pity, anger, fear, and righteous indignation. Pity—feeling sorry for someone—promotes distance, the opposite of compassion. While anger can serve to motivate you to be compassionate, staying mired in anger is paralyzing. Fear stifles courage, which is the strength to move forward bravely. Righteous indignation, like pity, separates you from others. It exalts your judgment about injustice and interferes with the ability to empathize and take action.

Compassion is a big issue, but our synthesis of compassion has these major tenets:

- Feeling a sense of responsibility for the suffering of all others, including the suffering caused by injustice.
- Having an emotional connection with people who suffer.
- Taking action to end the suffering of others.
- Practicing forgiveness of others and self.
- Rejecting pity, anger, fear, and righteous indignation.

¹ Feldman, Christina. *Compassion: Listening to the Cries of the World*. Perseus Books Group, 2005.

Discussion Exercises

We believe that as users look for opportunities to become more compassionate, they will discover many ways to use the cards. We would, however, like to suggest some activities that may be helpful.

- Facilitate discussions of the entire set of cards, one card at a time. Such discussions would allow for the identification of similarities and differences in cultural experiences and compassion principles.
- Group cards by theme and discuss each grouping. This discussion would deepen a group's knowledge of particular issues of oppression and cultural experience.
- Choose cards relevant to the cultural issues you are working on, such as civil rights or immigration, and discuss the cards related to that issue.
- Assign one card to each person in your group (more cards if your group is smaller than 26; more than one person to a card if your group is larger than 26) to do the "further readings" and report the findings to the group. This will help your group learn more about the history and background of various cultural issues.
- Have individuals share their personal experiences with discrimination, family history, immigration, segregation or any of the themes in the cards to help others talk about what is depicted.

Action Exercises

Each card has a suggested task related to compassion. Like the discussion exercises, completion of the tasks offers opportunities to enable compassion in the world around you. If you are working with a group, the exercises below offer approaches to sharing your accomplishments with others.

- Assign different cards to all group members. Have group members complete the task on their assigned cards and report back to the whole group about their experiences.
- Assign the same card and task to everyone. Compare the stories of success when individuals report back on what they have done.
- For a longer-term project, have everyone work through the same cards and tasks over time. Share how learning about others has deepened the capacity for compassion.

Common Themes

One of the primary uses for the compassion cards is to generate discussion on topics with which our society struggles. The cards offer entry points into topics that are considered off-limits, taboo, offensive, or even threatening. As you review all of the cards, you will find that themes for discussion emerge. Some cards reflect a single theme while others embody multiple themes. The cards can be used to discuss one theme or several themes simultaneously.

The themes in the cards include the following:

Theme	Card Number
Immigrants/Immigration to the United States	1, 7, 10, 16, 20, 26
Migrants	18, 24
Oppression/Discrimination	2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26
Protest for Social Justice	3, 5, 6, 10, 14
Cultural Knowledge of Self and Others	(All Cards)
Civil Rights Pioneers and Trailblazers	3, 5, 9, 19, 25
Poverty	1, 6, 7, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26
Knowledge About Indigenous People	8, 14, 23
Compassion for Those With Whom We Disagree	2, 11, 17
Segregation	2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 15, 16, 19, 21

Card Background Information and Questions

In this section, we offer historical background and context for all cards. Use that information to enlarge your understanding of others and by extension your understanding of your own background and influences. Also, answer the Questions to Consider for each card. Whether you are working alone or with others, the questions provide an opportunity for more learning.

Information about each card is set forth on separate pages below.

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Immigrants huddled together on a ship sailing to the United States, c. 1902.

Compassion Principle

Compassion asks us to turn toward—not away from—people who are excluded or shunned.

Compassion Task

Find someone in need who is treated as an outsider. Be kind to that person in some way—large or small.

Background Information

Early twentieth century immigrants to the United States, such as the ones depicted in the card, came mainly from Southern and Eastern Europe, which included Italy, Greece, Hungary, Poland, and Russia. Economic opportunity was a driving force for most immigrants. Farming improvements created surplus labor in Eastern Europe, while U.S. textile, steel, coal, and automobile industries attracted that labor, especially to the major cities. By 1907, a peak year for European immigration, 1,285,349 people entered the country. During the period between 1890 and 1910, the immigrant share of the U.S. population reached a historical peak of 14.8 percent.

Shipping lines sent agents to Europe to sell steerage tickets on steam-powered ocean liners bound for the United States. Steerage tickets came with no space reservations and were especially profitable for steamship companies. Conditions onboard were crowded, dark, and unsanitary. (Passenger mortality could be as high as ten percent.)

Questions to Consider

1. Do you have ancestors who came to the United States in a way similar to that depicted in the card?
2. What do you imagine a steerage voyage was like?
3. In 1902, why might some U.S. citizens have resented the great influx of immigrants?
4. Today, why is it worthwhile to have empathy for immigrants like those on the crowded deck?

Further Reading

- [A History of Immigration in the USA](#)
- [Immigration to the United States](#)
- [Immigrant Experience](#)
- [The Immigrant Journey](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Gov. George Wallace, flanked in the doorway of the Foster Auditorium by the Alabama Highway Patrol, strives to block racial integration at the University of Alabama, 1963.

Compassion Principle

Compassion asks us to unlearn the prejudices we hold against others.

Compassion Task

Choose one prejudice you would like to unlearn. Use the next month to work on that prejudice.

Background Information

In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court of the United States held that “separate but equal” schools for black children were unconstitutional. That decision meant that the University of Alabama had to be desegregated. After *Brown*, hundreds of African Americans applied to be admitted to the university but were denied. In 1963, under a federal court order, the university ordered that Vivian Malone Jones, Dave McGlathery, and James Hood be admitted.

George Wallace was the Democratic Governor of Alabama at the time and was an avowed segregationist. In a symbolic show of resistance, he blocked the entrance to the Foster Auditorium where Malone, McGlathery, and Jones would have their courses approved and their educational fees paid. With the press watching, U.S. Deputy Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach—pictured in the card—asked Wallace to step aside, but Wallace interrupted him with a speech on states’ rights. Katzenbach then contacted President Kennedy, who issued an executive order that federalized the Alabama National Guard. Wallace finally stepped aside when National Guard General Henry Graham ordered him to move “under the orders of the President of the United States.”

Questions to Consider

1. What prejudices might have driven George Wallace to oppose equal rights for African Americans and to make an inaugural promise of “segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever”?
2. What does the presence of the Alabama Highway Patrol bring to the picture with Wallace?
3. Why do prejudices seem like well-reasoned ideas to the people who hold the prejudices?

Further Reading

- [Stand in the Schoolhouse Door](#)
- [George Wallace Stood in a Doorway at the University of Alabama 50 Years Ago Today](#)

Quickening of Compassion

**Caption**

—Before Rosa Parks, Claudette Colvin, aged fifteen, refused to follow segregated busing laws in Montgomery, Alabama, 1955.

Compassion Principle

To make a difference, compassion requires action against injustice.

Compassion Task

Take a stand about something you believe in. Speak up, write a letter, make your voice heard.

Background Information

Claudette Colvin was a resident of Montgomery, Alabama. On March 2, 1955, when Colvin was fifteen, she was riding home from school on a city bus. She sat down near the emergency exit in the “colored section” of the bus. As supported by state and local law, the procedure of the bus system was that if the “white seats” in front were filled, then any black people were supposed to move to seats farther back or stand. A white woman boarded the bus and was left standing, so the bus driver ordered Colvin and three women to move back. The three moved, but Colvin refused. The driver contacted the police, and when Colvin again refused to move, she was arrested for violating segregation laws, disturbing the peace, and assault.

Colvin was a plaintiff in *Browder v. Gayle*, a federal civil rights case that determined that the segregated bus service in Montgomery was unconstitutional. Nine months later, Rosa Parks, Secretary of the Montgomery, Alabama Chapter of the NAACP, also refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery bus. Because she was older and considered reputable and prominent in the community, activists used Park’s incident to rally support for the Montgomery bus boycott. Thus, Rosa Parks—not Claudette Colvin—became an icon of the civil rights movement in the United States.

Questions to Consider

1. What feelings do you have when you look at Colvin’s picture and imagine her arrest as a youth?
2. What does a young activist like Colvin put at risk by opposing the law?
3. If no one acknowledges or supports a person’s stand against injustice, are the person’s efforts still worthwhile?
4. What effect does taking a stand against injustice have on the larger society?

Further Reading

- [Claudette Colvin Biography](#)
- [Claudette Colvin \(Wikipedia\)](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

An African American boy uses a segregated drinking fountain on the courthouse grounds in Halifax, North Carolina, 1938.

Compassion Principle

Compassion asks us to confront injustice.

Compassion Task

Challenge an act of discrimination or the prejudice that incites discrimination.

Background Information

After Reconstruction, Southern states created “Jim Crow” laws that separated black people and white people into separate facilities for housing, hospitals, restrooms, schools, cinemas, and other public accommodations. Racial segregation was also carried out in Northern states, where separate housing, employment, and school practices were also oppressive. In the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the United States Supreme Court held that under the doctrine of “separate but equal,” racial segregation was constitutionally permissible. That decision was not overturned until 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

Halifax, North Carolina, which is shown with a segregated drinking fountain, is called the “Birthplace of Freedom” because it was the location where colonists adopted the Halifax Resolves, the first official resolution that authorized independence from Great Britain.

Questions to Consider

1. What feelings do you have when you view the African American boy standing at the segregated drinking fountain?
2. What effects might segregation have had on the African American boy as he lived his life through adulthood?
3. How can people confront injustice when laws or practices of a society say that the injustice is fair?
4. What are some of the ways people can challenge discrimination and prejudice?
5. How should we view the contradiction of Halifax, North Carolina being called the “Birthplace of Freedom” with the racial segregation depicted in the card?

Further Reading

- [Racial Segregation in the United States](#)
- [Halifax Resolves](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Lillian Smith, an under-appreciated civil rights pioneer who fought against racism and segregation, 1944.

Compassion Principle

Compassion has many faces.

Compassion Task

Find someone who embodies compassion. Talk to them about what they do and why.

Background Information

Lillian Smith was one of the first prominent white Southerners to denounce racial segregation and Jim Crow laws. She authored the book, *Strange Fruit*, a novel about an interracial relationship, and *Killers of the Dream*, a sociological analysis and commentary about the moral depravity of racism in the South.

Smith's writings about race, conferences about racism, and meetings with activists predated many notable touch points of the U.S. civil rights movement, including the 1955 Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott. She remained dedicated to anti-racism efforts throughout her life even when her actions made her a social outcast.

Questions to Consider

1. Why are people often surprised to know that a Southern white woman, Lillian Smith, championed the civil rights of African Americans against segregation?
2. Why was it especially important for a Southern white woman to champion the civil rights of African Americans?
3. How should people prepare themselves for the rejection that sometimes accompanies working for the rights of people who are shunned, oppressed, or unpopular?

Further Reading

- [Lillian Smith \(1897 - 1966\)](#)
- [Strange Fruit](#)
- [Killers of the Dream](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

A protester in Minneapolis, asking for \$15 minimum wage, paid sick days, and union rights for fast food workers, 2016.

Compassion Principle

Ignoring people is the opposite of compassion.

Compassion Task

Acknowledge someone who you would usually overlook or ignore.

Background Information

Fast food workers and other low wage earners have been protesting since 2011 in support of a \$15 hourly minimum wage. Currently, the federal minimum wage is \$7.25 and has not increased since 2009. However, twenty-nine states and the District of Columbia have a minimum wage higher than required by federal law. Likewise, forty-two counties and municipalities have adopted higher-than-federal minimum wages.

Whether the federal minimum wage should be raised is a matter of division in the United States. For some, the wages paid to workers should be left for employers/the free market to decide. For others, the need to ensure a living wage for all workers is paramount.

Questions to Consider

1. What impression do you get when viewing the card of a woman holding a sign that calls for “\$15 For Families”?
2. How do you think most people react to protesters like the one in the card when they see them in person or hear about them on the news?
3. Why is it important to care about low-wage workers even if we make enough money for ourselves and our families?

Further Reading

- [Minimum Wage Tracker](#)
- [As Workers Strike Again, the Fight for \\$15 Expands Its Political Horizons](#)
- [Why Do People Care So Much About the Minimum Wage?](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Mrs. Guadina with three children and pregnant with her fourth. She works as a seamstress finishing pants for poverty wages, New York City (Manhattan), 1912.

Compassion Principle

Compassion asks us to speak up for people who live in poverty and to try to improve their lives.

Compassion Task

Help someone who lives in poverty. Talk to people you know about why what you are doing is important.

Background Information

A wave of Eastern European and Southern European immigrants came to the United States during the early twentieth century and lived in large cities because of the availability of work. Because the immigrants encountered hostility from native-born citizens, many moved into impoverished neighborhoods. Living quarters were usually tenements, derelict apartments with one or two rooms. Families sometimes worked out of their tenement rooms as shown on the card.

Living conditions were terrible: tenements were overcrowded, rubbish accumulated without proper disposal, and potable water was unavailable. Unsanitary conditions triggered outbreaks of cholera, typhoid, and smallpox. Social service agencies created programs to help poor immigrants with daycare, education, and job training.

Questions to Consider

1. What is your reaction to seeing Mrs. Guadina and her children in the setting shown in the card?
2. In 1912, why would it have been important to care about the poverty of Mrs. Guadina and her family?
3. How are people who live in poverty perceived today? Why should we care?

Further Reading

- [Immigrants in 1900's New York City \(Living Conditions\)](#)
- [Immigrants, Cities, and Disease: Immigration and Health Concerns in Late Nineteenth Century America](#)
- [Immigrant Experience](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

A member of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall, circa 1897.

Compassion Principle

Learning about the unique cultural history of other people enables compassion.

Compassion Task

Read about the historical struggles that one Native American tribe has had with the U.S. government. Share and discuss your information with a friend.

Background Information

Eastern and western bands of the Northern Shoshone and the Northern Paiute (Bannocks) make up the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall. The tribes lived on land that includes present-day Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and parts of Canada. Today, there are approximately 6,000 tribal members. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes is a federally-recognized sovereign nation.

The Fort Hall Reservation is located along the Snake River in Idaho and was established under the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868. Because land on the reservation was unsuited for subsistence agriculture, many tribe members died of hunger and disease. Under the Dawes Act, the federal government reduced the size of the reservation by “allotting” plots of land to tribe members and allowing the government to sell “excess” communal land to settlers.

Questions to Consider

1. How much did you previously learn about the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall through your formal education? ...through your self-education?
2. Native American and Alaska Native people, including those of more than one race, comprise only two percent of the U.S. population. Why is it still important to understand their unique cultural histories?
3. Why should we see the person depicted in the card as a distinct individual, not only as a tribal member?

Further Reading

- [Shoshone-Bannock Tribes](#)
- [Fort Hall Indian Reservation](#)
- [Dawes Act](#)
- [Tribal Nations & the United States: An Introduction \(on tribal sovereignty\)](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Hazel Ying Lee, one of the first two Chinese Americans in the Women Airforce Service Pilots, 1932.

Compassion Principle

Compassion ignites when we learn the experiences of people who have cultural backgrounds different from our own.

Compassion Task

Read about Hazel Ying Lee's WASP career and her family's struggle to bury Lee and her brother, Victor, in River View Cemetery, Portland, Oregon.

Background Information

Hazel Ying Lee was a Chinese American born in Portland, Oregon in 1912. She developed an early love for flying and joined Portland's Chinese Flying Club as a young woman. In 1932 she earned her pilot's license, which made her one for the first Chinese American women to do so.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Air Force created the Women Airforce Service Pilots, WASP, because of the shortage of male pilots. Lee was accepted into the fourth class and was steely. When taking flying instruction at Avenger Field in Sweetwater, Texas, she fell out of the cockpit when an instructor made an unexpected maneuver. (Her seat belt was fastened incorrectly.) Nevertheless, she used her parachute, landed in a field, and walked back to the base.

Lee and other members of her Ferrying Group delivered aircraft from factories to embarkation points where the planes would be shipped to Europe and the Pacific. She later went to Pursuit School for training and flew fighter aircraft, such as the P-51 Mustang.

Lee's life and character broke stereotypes of Chinese women being passive and showed that American women could participate ably in the male-dominated fields of aviation and military service. She was inducted into Oregon's Aviation Hall of Honor in 2004.

Questions to Consider

1. Why was Lee well served in aviation and military service by a determined and unflinching attitude?
2. Do you think Lee could have pursued her dream of being a pilot during the 1930s and 1940s if she were "just average?" Why or why not?
3. While serving in the WASP, Lee had to make a forced landing in a Kansas field. The farmer chased her around her plane with a pitchfork, exclaiming that the Japanese had invaded. (Lee survived the encounter.) If you were in a situation similar to Lee's, what would you think about the farmer?

Further Reading

- [Hazel Ying Lee](#)
- [Remembering Hazel Lee, the First Chinese-American Female Military Pilot](#)
- [Hazel Ying Lee: A Chinese-American WWII Female Pilot Who Broke the Boundaries of Prejudice and Stereotype](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

A marcher, among 500 people gathered in support of immigrants and protesting U.S. immigration policies, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2018.

Compassion Principle

Compassion bridges the divide between “them” and “us.”

Compassion Task

Talk to someone whose cultural background is different from yours. Ask them to share some of their struggles.

Background Information

The United States has been regulating immigration since the ratification of its constitution in 1787. Article I, section 8 gives Congress the power to establish naturalization rules. The 1790 Naturalization Act was first to specify who could become a citizen: “free white persons” of “good moral character” who had lived in the country for a minimum of two years.

Immigration legislation through the mid-1960’s favored Europeans, but the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act opened immigration from other continents. More recent laws and presidential orders have been shaped by concerns about terrorists, refugees, and undocumented immigrants. For example, the government gives Temporary Protective Status to immigrants after national emergencies in their countries of origin. The government plans to cancel that status for up to 59,000 Haitians and 200,000 Salvadorans.

Questions to Consider

1. In the United States, the topic of immigration is controversial. What part should empathy for immigrants play as we discuss current immigration laws and policies?
2. What does the Mayan-style headdress of the marcher in the card suggest about why he joined a protest against U.S. immigration policies in 2018?
3. Put yourself in the shoes of the marcher. What might he want from people who see or hear about the immigration protest in which he participated? Is agreement or disagreement all that a bystander can offer?

Further Reading

- [History of Laws Concerning Immigration and Naturalization in the United States](#)
- [How U.S. Immigration Laws and Rules Have Changed Through History](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

A protestor at an anti-tax rally, holding a sign that portrays President Obama as a chimpanzee, St. Paul, Minnesota, 2013.

Compassion Principle

Compassion asks us to have an open heart even for people with whom we vehemently disagree.

Compassion Task

See the common bond of humanity in someone with whom you strongly disagree. Share your bond with that person.

Background Information

The protestor's sign refers to outworn beliefs that black people were not fully human, but monkey-like beings, unentitled to human rights, courtesies, and empathy. That large-scale dehumanization supported slavery and continues to promote bigotry.

Questions to Consider

1. What is your initial impression of the protestor? ...of the people standing in the background?
2. The protestor's sign mocks the humanity of President Obama and by extension all black people. In that light, what responsibility do the other demonstrators have to disassociate themselves from the protestor if they believe differently?
3. The protestor holds a sign that is racially offensive. Nevertheless, why is it important not to dehumanize the protestor or people who hold similar views?
4. How can we have compassion for the protestor, even if we find the sign he holds disgusting or hurtful?

Further Reading

- [Comparing Black People to Monkeys Has a Long, Dark Simian History](#)
- [Ethnic Notions](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Students attending Gage Elementary School, a racially segregated public school in Topeka, Kansas, 1949.

Compassion Principle

Compassion requires that we look beneath what seems appealing, safe, or ordinary.

Compassion Task

Speak up about an injustice you believe is often hidden or overlooked.

Background Information

After the Civil War many black families moved to Topeka, Kansas for new opportunities. In the 1950s about eight percent of the city's population was black. Local transportation systems were integrated, but restaurants, hotels, and other places of public accommodation were segregated by custom and practice. An 1879 state law permitted the Topeka Board of Education to maintain separate elementary schools for black and white elementary students, and the board did so.

The landmark case of [*Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*](#), decided in 1954, held that "separate but equal" schools denied black children equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment. The children shown in the card were attending one of Topeka's segregated elementary schools before the *Brown* decision.

Questions to Consider

1. What do you think the students depicted in the card thought about attending a segregated school? How might have their perspectives evolved as they became adults?
2. How does knowing that the card depicts a racially segregated classroom affect your impression of the card?
3. Why should people look beneath what seems appealing, safe, or ordinary in evaluating what is just or fair?

Further Reading

- [Separate is Not Equal: Brown v. Board of Education](#)
- [How Brown v. Board of Education Changed—and Didn't Change—American Education](#)
- [The Segregation of Topeka's Public School System, 1879-1951](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Muslim student and Holocaust survivor hold hands at Auschwitz-Birkenau during March of Remembrance and Hope, 2006.

Compassion Principle

Compassion requires us to remember acts of genocide so they are not repeated.

Compassion Task

Learn about and honor victims of the Holocaust.

Background Information

The Holocaust—*Shoah*—was the systematic oppression and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. The Holocaust was a genocide: two-thirds of the Jewish population in Europe between 1941 and 1945 were methodically murdered.

Holocaust Remembrance Day or *Yom Hashoah* day is the 27th day of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar, which is lunar and therefore changes every year in the United States. Yom Hashoah marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The Week of Remembrance is held the Sunday before Yom Hashoah through the next Sunday.

Questions to Consider

1. Why is it important to remember the past suffering of the Holocaust?
2. The Holocaust remembrance has been described as a “call to conscience.” What does that mean?
3. How can people honor Holocaust victims and help ensure the Holocaust is never repeated?

Further Reading

- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)
- [Yad Vashem—The World Holocaust Remembrance Center](#)
- [Warsaw Ghetto Uprising](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

A Native American marching in a civil rights protest, Minneapolis, MN, 2017.

Compassion Principle

Compassion asks us to see people as they are now and to treat them respectfully.

Compassion Task

Ask two people who are culturally different from you to share an issue that most concerns them. Listen only to understand. Offer thanks.

Background Information

A 2007 research study found:

- Many Native Americans felt that their ancestors were the victims of injustice, similar to the Holocaust. Non-Native Americans, although sympathetic, had little understanding of that history.
- Non-Native Americans related to Native Americans as if they belong to the past only.
- Many Native Americans believed that mainstream perceptions of them are based on stereotypes.
- Native Americans said they continue to face prejudice and discrimination. Non-Native Americans living near larger Native American populations frequently resented what they saw as preferential treatment for Native Americans.
- Native Americans were proud of their heritages, aware of social and economic problems they faced, and fearful of losing their distinctive cultures.
- Native Americans want to be better understood. Non-Native Americans expressed genuine interest in learning more about Native Americans.

Questions to Consider

1. Why do you think that the understanding of Native American culture and history is so limited?
2. Why is stereotypical thinking about Native Americans prevalent?
3. How can people respectfully get quality information about people who are culturally different from themselves?

Further Reading

- [Contemporary Native American Issues in the United States](#)
- [13 Issues Facing Native People Beyond Mascots And Casinos](#)
- [Walking a Mile: A First Step Toward Mutual Understanding \(2007 study mentioned in Background Information above\)](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Lunchroom advertising “White & Colored Served.” People of Color probably were served only through a side window and not seated, Belle Glade (area), Florida, 1939.

Compassion Principle

Compassion asks us to be mindful about how we recount our history, which has complexities, vagaries, failings and triumphs.

Compassion Task

Read about lunch counter protests against segregation. Share what you’ve learned with two other people.

Background Information

The Jim Crow era was a period of enforced racial segregation in the United States from the time of Reconstruction in 1877 until the time of the civil rights movement. The era included anti-black segregation laws, but it was also supported by a racial caste system that operated informally.

During the Jim Crow era, Florida had laws that required racially segregated schools, railroad cars, waiting rooms, and streetcars. Also, the practice of many establishments like the one depicted in the card was to deny service to black people or to give them inferior access to the establishment. A “colored” entrance in the back of a building was common. A separate window where blacks could get food at a restaurant, but not sit down for a meal, was typical.

Questions to Consider

1. What are your impressions of the image in the card?
2. The Jim Crow era has been described as a time when the United States had a racial caste system in which white people were superior and other races—especially black people—were inferior. Why is it important to recount and understand the era?
3. Do elements of the Jim Crow era persist in our society today? How can we ensure that we live up to our best values in the future?

Further Reading

- [List of Jim Crow Law Examples by State](#)
- [What Was Jim Crow](#)
- [Jim Crow Law](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

High school commencement ceremony at Tule Lake Segregation Center, an internment camp for Japanese Americans, Newell, California, 1944.

Compassion Principle

Compassion can heal the wounds of prejudice, discrimination, and apathy.

Compassion Task

Let someone who has been the target of prejudice or discrimination know that you care.

Background Information

Before World War II, Japanese people immigrated mostly to Hawaii and the West Coast of the United States. The growing population sparked fears that there would be an Asian takeover of white farms and businesses. Groups such as the Native Sons of the Golden West successfully lobbied the government to restrict the rights of Japanese immigrants to become naturalized citizens and to own property.

Despite overwhelming evidence of Japanese American loyalty to the United States, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, ethnic prejudice against the population increased dramatically. That and a vague reference to spies in the Roberts Commission Report led President Roosevelt to issue an executive order that allowed military commanders to place into concentration camps people of Japanese ancestry living in California and parts of Oregon, Washington, and Arizona. The military placed about 120,000 people in concentration camps, such as the Tule Lake Segregation Center shown in the card. About two-thirds of the people interned were U.S. citizens.

General John DeWitt, head of the Western Defense Command, stated:

I don't want any...(persons of Japanese ancestry) here. They are a dangerous element. There is no way to determine their loyalty.... It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen, he is still a Japanese. American citizenship does not necessarily determine loyalty.... But we must worry about the Japanese all the time until he is wiped off the map.

Questions to Consider

1. What contradictions do you see between the photograph of the high school graduation ceremony and Japanese internment?
2. Eleanor Roosevelt spoke out against the internment of Japanese Americans: "We cannot progress if we look down upon any group of people amongst us because of race or religion." Why are statements like hers important?

Further Reading

- [Exploring America's Concentration Camps](#)
- [Internment of Japanese Americans](#)
- [Eleanor Roosevelt: Undo the Mistake of Internment](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Card 17

Caption

Ku Klux Klan preparing for a cross burning, Jackson County, Ohio, 1987.

Compassion Principle

Through compassion we commit to end bigotry.

Compassion Task

Help an organization that works to end bigotry or discrimination. Tell your friends why you donated your time or money.

Background Information

On June 29, 1987, the Ohio Knights of the Ku Klux Klan held a rally in Jackson County, Ohio. The rally was held at the invitation of the Ray family, which was involved in a land ownership dispute with their neighbors, the Stepps. The Rays leased a field to the Ku Klux Klan in the hope that the rally would help them protect their 150-acre farm.

The Klan was founded around the time of Reconstruction to resist policies aimed at political and economic equality for blacks. The group later also denounced immigrants, Catholics, Jews and others. Cross burning (or lighting) was first described in Thomas Dixon's novel, *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, and was depicted in the novel's 1915 film adaptation, "Birth of a Nation." Today, the burning cross remains a symbol that recalls a Klan history of lynching and bigotry.

Questions to Consider

1. How would you describe the mood of the people shown in the card? What impression do you get from the two children shown in the card?
2. What effect might the adults' membership in the Klan have on the children (presumably their parents or other trusted adults)?
3. Why is it important to both take a stand against the bigotry of the Klan, but not dehumanize its members?

Further Reading

- [Cross Burning](#)
- [Ku Klux Klan \(video\)](#)
- [Deputies Investigating Shooting Following Rural Klan Rally](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Leaving a drought, stranded members of a Missouri family, U.S. Highway 99, Tracy (Vicinity) California, 1937.

Compassion Principle

Remember that struggle has many faces, some similar and some different from your own.

Compassion Task

Find two people you did not previously know and ask them about a struggle they have had in their lives. Listen only to understand their experiences.

Background Information

During the period from 1930 to 1940, the Great Plains suffered a period of drought and dust storms. The economic impact was devastating. About 3.5 million people moved out of the Plains states in search of new economic opportunities in places such as California. The migration was the largest of its kind during a ten-year period. The migrants were not just farmers, but also professionals and small business owners.

Questions to Consider

1. The mother and child pictured in the card were part of a mass migration fomented by a drought in the Great Plains. Why do many people *not* associate the picture with a great migration?
2. What do you imagine life was like for the family shown in the card? What factors would have made their life easier or harder?
3. Why is it important to understand and remember the struggles of the people depicted in the card?

Further Reading

- [Dust Bowl](#)

Quickening of Compassion

**Caption**

Noel F. Parrish, Commander of the Tuskegee Airmen, fought against racial discrimination in the military.

Compassion Principle

Compassion teaches us that virtue has many faces.

Compassion Task

Read about the life of Noel F. Parrish, his advocacy for the Tuskegee Airmen, and his work for racial equality in the military.

Background Information

Before 1941 black pilots were prohibited from flying for the U.S. military. That year, advocacy from civil rights organizations prompted the military to form the first black squadron at Tuskegee University in Alabama. The squadron was known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

Noel F. Parrish became Director of Training for the Tuskegee program and was later promoted to Field Commander. Parrish, a white officer, advocated for the black airmen with military officials and hostile white people near Tuskegee University. He is remembered for promoting integration of the military and helping the Tuskegee Airmen succeed.

Questions to Consider

1. What preconceptions about Noel F. Parrish might you have if you only saw the photograph of him as shown on the card?
2. What motivates people like Noel F. Parrish to take a stand against racial inequities?
3. Why is it especially important for people who are not the target of racial discrimination to take a stand against racial discrimination?

Further Reading

- [Tuskegee Airmen History](#)
- [Noel F. Parrish](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Immigrants poised to enter the United States, Ellis Island, NY, 1908.

Compassion Principle

Understanding your ancestors' struggles kindles compassion for others.

Compassion Task

Find out how your ancestors strived for success in the United States. Share that story with others.

Background Information

During the early 1900s, most immigrants to the United States came from southern and eastern Europe. It was common for one member of a family to immigrate to the United States, save money, then bring other family members over by sending them prepaid tickets. From 1900 to 1910 most immigrants arriving at Ellis Island, an immigrant inspection station, were joining their families or friends. In 1907, a peak year, over one million immigrants were processed through the station.

Passengers on steamships were put in three categories: first class, second class, and steerage. Steerage was the cheapest and usually offered deplorable conditions in communal areas of the ship. Only steerage passengers were processed through Ellis Island. First and second class passengers were inspected onboard.

Because inspections were rushed and European immigration was favored, only about two percent of immigrants were sent back to their homelands because of medical issues or other immigration prohibitions. Approximately forty percent of the U.S. population can trace their ancestry to immigrants who were processed through Ellis Island.

Questions to Consider

1. What are your impressions of the many people depicted in the card?
2. How do you think the immigrants felt upon first arriving in the United States? What fears and apprehensions might they have had? What supports might they have needed to survive and thrive?
3. Many immigrants from Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Africa also have one family member immigrate to pave the way for additional family members. Do you think these immigrants are viewed the same as those in the 1900s?
4. What help do you think today's immigrants to the United States need to survive and thrive?

Further Reading

- [Immigrant Journey](#)
- [Ellis Island](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Card 21

Caption

Grandfather and grandson at Manzanar Internment Camp, Manzanar, California, 1942.

Compassion Principle

Even if our actions might be unsuccessful, compassion asks us to try to help others.

Compassion Task

Write to your local, state, or federal representative about a cause that will help others. Tell your representative why the cause is important.

Background Information

When the internment of Japanese Americans (who lived on the West Coast) took place in 1942, few people protested. The San Francisco Examiner announced in a headline, “Ouster of All Japs in California Near!” Anti-Japanese sentiment was high.

From the *Saturday Evening Post*:

If all of the Japs were removed tomorrow, we’d never miss them... because the white farmers can take over and produce everything the Jap grows. And we don’t want them back when the war ends, either. (Quoting the head of the California Grower-Shipper Vegetable Association.)

U.S. religious organizations were often sympathetic to Japanese Americans during the war. The American Baptist Home Mission Society produced materials that asked for “fair play” for Japanese Americans. A small newspaper in the state of Washington, *The Bainbridge Island Review*, also advocated against the internment. Many Americans were indifferent or hostile: “Personally, I hate the Japanese. And that goes for all of them,” said Harry McLemore in a piece published in the *Seattle Times*.

Questions to Consider

1. What are your impressions of the grandfather and grandson shown in the card?
2. There were people across the country who voiced opposition to the internment of Japanese Americans. Although the detention took place, why was their continued opposition worthwhile?
3. What risks do people take when they voice opposition to injustices?

Further Reading

- [PBS on Japanese Internment](#)
- [Anti-Japanese Sentiment in the United States](#)
- [These Anti-Japanese Signs From World War II Are A Warning Against Bigotry Today](#)
- [An Eloquent Baptist Protest Against Internment Camps During WWI](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Sweeper and doffer boys at Lancaster Cotton Mills, Lancaster, S.C., 1908.

Compassion Principle

Compassion is an ethical practice that invites us to help people who are oppressed.

Compassion Task

Read about child farmworkers in the United States. Share what you have learned with others.

Background Information

In Southern textile mills during the early 1900s, the work was hot, noisy, and dangerous. Laborers worked up to twelve hours per day, six days per week. Lint stayed in the factory air and could damage the lungs of employees.

Children under sixteen made up about a quarter of the mill workforce. Doffers replaced full industrial bobbins with empty ones. For low-income families, the income children produced was vital. By 1900 about twenty percent of all children were employed.

Today children are restricted in their employment by the Fair Labor Standards Act. With a few exceptions, children must be sixteen years old to work and can work no more than three hours on a school day and eight hours on other days. In agriculture, however, children may be employed at any age on a small farm with their parents' permission. They may work on any farm with parental consent at age twelve. There are no limits on the number of hours children can work in agriculture when they are not in school.

Questions to Consider

1. The sweeper in the foreground of the picture appears to be young and unhappy. What do you imagine his life was like?
2. If you were a relatively wealthy adult who lived at the time children were employed in Southern textile mills, do you think you would have advocated for child labor reforms? Why or why not?
3. Today, what responsibility do we have to reform child labor laws for child farmworkers?

Further Reading

- [The Southern Textile Industry](#)
- [History of Child Labor in the United States—Part 1: Little Children Working](#)
- [Migrant Farm Workers: Our Nation's Invisible Population](#)
- [Children in the Fields](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Card 23

Caption

Kiowa Tribal Chairman Big Bow receives President Ford at a campaign rally, Lawton, Oklahoma, 1976.

Compassion Principle

Knowledge lays the groundwork for compassion.

Compassion Task

Read about the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. Share what you learned with five other people.

Background Information

The Kiowa are Native American people from the Great Plains. They are a federally-recognized tribe known as the Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma. The Constitution of the Kiowa Tribe sets forth a Bill of Rights for individuals and four branches of government: the Kiowa Indian Council branch, the Executive branch, the Legislative branch and the Judicial branch. The Executive Branch is composed of a Chairman and Vice Chairman who serve four-year terms. Among other duties, the Chairman serves as the tribe's representative in negotiations with other governments.

Beginning in 1940, a series of laws referred to as Termination began to chip away at tribal sovereignty for Native Americans. States were given criminal jurisdiction over tribes; recognition for more than one hundred tribes was ended; millions of acres of trust land was removed from protected status and sold to individuals who were not Native Americans; federal support for services to Native Americans on reservations was ended. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 reversed this trend by giving Native Americans greater control over how tribes administered federal funding. The law was signed by President Gerald R. Ford.

Questions to Consider

1. What is your impression of the meeting between the Tribal Chairman and the President?
2. How much did you previously know about the policy of Termination and its effects on Native Americans?
3. Why is learning about the legislative history of Native Americans important?

Further Reading

- [Kiowa Tribe](#)
- [Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975](#)
- [Termination Policy](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

One of thousands of migrant worker families traveling to harvest crops in the San Joaquin Valley, 1935, California.

Compassion Principle

A path to compassion lies in understanding that many people have met countless hardships.

Compassion Task

Think about how your struggles may be similar to those of people who are culturally different from you. Share those similarities with people you know.

Background Information

In the early 1900s, the Mexican Revolution and the series of Mexican civil wars caused Mexicans to flee to the United States. U.S. farmers recruited Mexicans, but their working conditions were often poor, and their pay was less than that given to white workers.

The stock market crash of 1929 and the creation of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s caused a migration of 2.5 million people into California in search of work. Although Mexican Americans were blamed for taking California farm jobs, in fact, the influx of mostly white refugees from the Midwest caused wages to be depressed and unemployment to rise.

Shelters for migrant farm workers were usually shacks with dirt floors. Water would be carried from a stream or ditch. Sanitation was inadequate. When crops were harvested, the migrant workers had to move on. One California farmer said, “(When) they have finished harvesting my crops, I will kick them out on the country road. My obligation is ended.”

Questions to Consider

1. What are your impressions of the migrant family depicted in the card?
2. What struggles might the family members have faced as they moved to different farms to harvest crops?
3. Did you or any of your family members face struggles similar to Mexican American migrant farm workers? Why is it important to find similarities with other people’s struggles?

Further Reading

- [Repatriation for Mexican & Filipino Farm Workers](#)
- [Lives of Migrant Farm Workers in the 1930s](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Card 25

Caption

Barbara Gittings, a pioneering activist, marches at Independence Hall during a July 4th Annual Reminder, one of the earliest demonstrations for LGBTQ civil rights, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (1966).

Compassion Principle

Compassion sometimes shows itself in acts of bravery, large and small.

Compassion Task

Embrace a challenging situation; try to make it better for someone who needs your support.

Background Information

Barbara Gittings was an early activist for LGBTQ rights. In 1965 she participated in the first LGBTQ marches at the White House and the State Department to protest the government's discrimination against LGBTQ employees. From 1965 to 1969 she led the Annual Reminder protest on July 4 at Independence Hall in Philadelphia. The event was designed to raise awareness about LGBTQ people not having civil rights protections in the United States. The final Annual Reminder took place on July 4, 1969, one week after the June 28 Stonewall Riots.

Gittings is especially remembered for her successful work with the American Psychiatric Association to remove homosexuality as a mental illness from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) in 1973. She also worked with the American Library Association to create resources for LGBTQ people in library materials and more visibility for LGBTQ people in the library profession. She marched, appeared on television, and facilitated discussions about LGBTQ people when doing so was extraordinary and sometimes met with derision.

In an interview with American Libraries magazine in 1999, she summarized her life-long activism in this way:

As a teenager, I had to struggle alone to learn about myself and what it meant to be gay. Now for 48 years I've had the satisfaction of working with other gay people all across the country to get the bigots off our backs, to oil the closet door hinges, to change prejudiced hearts and minds, and to show that gay love is good for us and for the rest of the world too. It's hard work — but it's vital, and it's gratifying, and it's often fun!

Questions to Consider

1. What courage was required of the protestors depicted in the card?
2. How are the struggles of LGBTQ people today similar to and different from the struggles during the 1960s?
3. Why is it important to practice compassion for groups of people who we may not understand?

Further Reading

- [Barbara Gittings: Mother of the Gay Rights Movement](#)
- [Barbara Gittings](#)

Quickening of Compassion



Caption

Children and a miner with a disability at a housing plot, Mesabi Range, Minn. (c. 1905).

Compassion Principle

Pity erodes compassion.

Compassion Task

Read about the difficulties people with disabilities face in finding employment. Tell others what you have discovered.

Background Information

Minnesota has three iron ranges, areas that contain sediment with high percentages of iron ore. The Mesabi Range is the largest in the state. The word *Mesabi* is an Ojibwa word meaning “giant.” Mining companies began ore shipments in 1892 and required plentiful labor. Thousands of immigrants from Finland, Austria-Hungary, Sweden, and Norway filled the labor force and were followed by immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. Iron miners had difficult lives because they worked long hours for low wages. As a result, many iron miners lived in dilapidated housing like that shown in the card.

Mining companies gave native-born miners the best jobs. Immigrants from northern Europe were also favored, whereas immigrants from eastern and southern Europe were considered less desirable and were placed lower in the mining hierarchy. Community leaders also discriminated against southern and eastern Europeans. Chapters of the Ku Klux Klan developed in the 1920s, especially in opposition to those immigrants who were Catholic or Jewish.

Mining was dangerous. Injuries and fatalities were common because of cave-ins and falling rock. Miners who were severely injured and disabled on the job had little recourse. The societal attitude toward people with disabilities was that they were generally incapable and must rely on charity, which came either from their families or institutions, such as almshouses.

Questions to Consider

1. What are your impressions of the miner, children, and the housing plot shown in the card?
2. What do you think daily life was like for the miner? ...for the children?
3. How would pity negatively affect the man shown in the card as he went about his daily life?
4. Why does pity undermine compassion?

Further Reading

- [Immigration to the Iron Range, 1880—1930](#)
- [Americans With Disabilities Still Can't Land Jobs](#)
- [Persons With a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics News Release](#)