

# LESSON PLAN:

## LEADERS OF LOVE: CONNECTING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

### INTRODUCTION

Our community has many organizations and individuals who cherish and lead with the values, principles, and message in Melanie's song. This lesson asks students to examine and reflect on how local organizations and individuals within our community live out the ideals expressed in **Leading with Love**, and how they, too, can see themselves as leaders of love.

Students will select one individual or organization to investigate to learn **who** they are, **what** they do, **why** they do it, and **how** they make a difference. This investigation may bring students closer to understanding what it means to be committed to *Leading with Love*.

### PREPARE

Make copies for students of:

- The **List of Individuals and Organizations to Research & Report On**, included in this lesson. **Feel free to add others if you wish**. Students can either select their research target, or you can assign one.
- Copies of the data collection worksheet, **Research Organizer: People & Organizations who Lead with Love** for recording information and summarizing their findings, or.....
- Post-it notes in a variety of colors and sizes and chart paper/poster boards for a **Swift Summary** version of their research.
- Room to display the worksheets/post-its on chart paper with their collective responses.

### PROCESS

#### PART ONE: RESEARCH AND LEARN

1. Ask students to discuss and summarize what it means to Lead with Love in everyday life, or review materials generated in earlier lessons. Take notes and keep them visible.
2. Comment about Twin Cities-based, local individuals and organizations dedicated to **Leading with Love**. It's part of their mission. Help students understand that both people and organizations can embrace the ideals to support others through their programs, products and services, and lead with love. Use students' examples from their earlier discussions.
3. Ask students who they know or know about, both individuals and those in organizations, who work to achieve the ideals and values expressed in leading with love. Discussion prompts might include:

### MINNESOTA STATE STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

#### WRITING STANDARDS:

*Literacy in History/  
Social Studies, Science,  
and Technical Subjects*

#### RESEARCH TO BUILD AND PRESENT KNOWLEDGE:

*Conduct short research projects to answer a question...drawing on several sources...*

*Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative data, print, physical, ...and digital sources... (and) integrate information into the text...*

*Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.*

- What people or organizations do you know that **Lead with Love** through their work?
  - Who are they?
  - What do they do in our community?
  - How do they do it?
  - For whom do they do it...who is it that they support?
  - Where and when do they provide help and a caring hand?
- Or suggest a specific and well-known organization/person that follows these ideals.

Write key points from the who/what/how discussion on the board or chart paper for later reference.

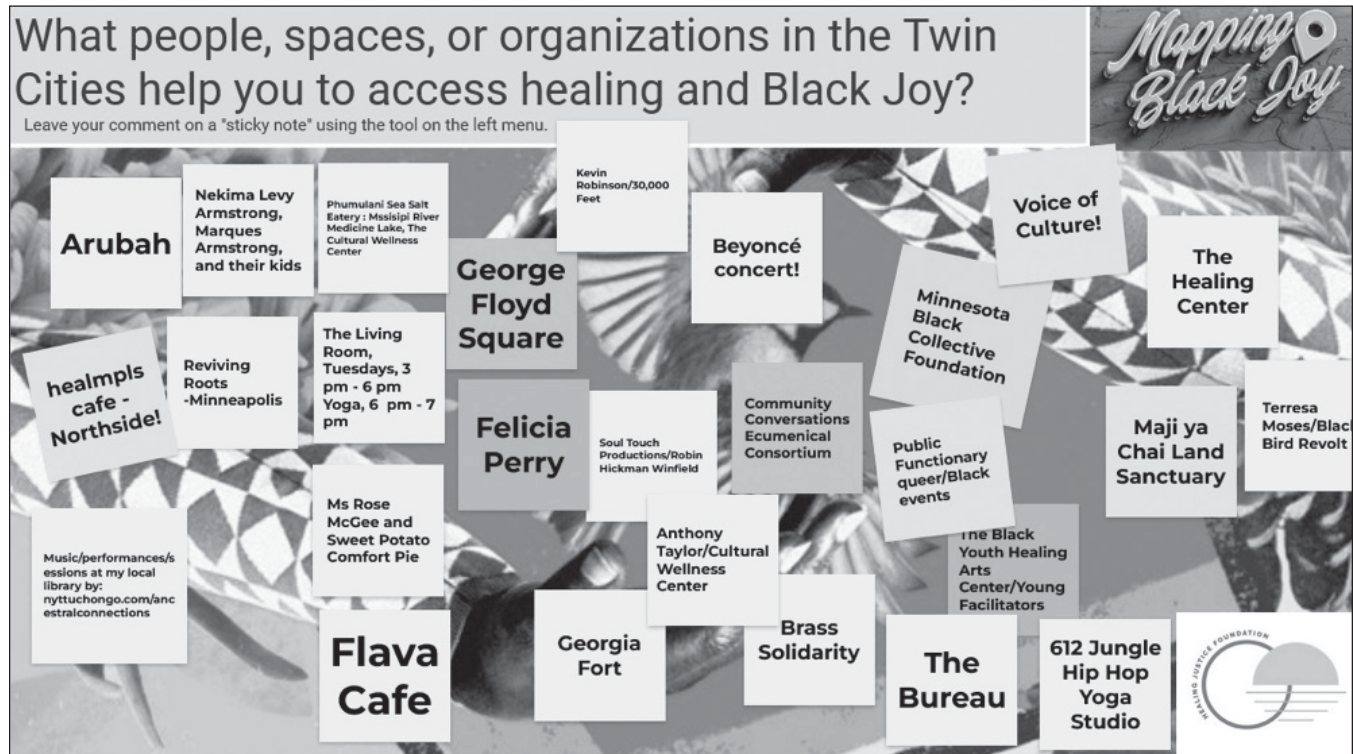
4. Observe that there are likely **students in class who may already be involved with organizations** whose missions are to provide help and support to community members. Take time to ask involved students what they do, for whom, and why they do it. Remind them that the WITNESS School Program, its staff and especially our Teaching Artists are all community leaders in the arts sector who make it a mission to lead with love and to be role models for our students.
5. Summarize the conversation. Begin a list of the organizations and individuals mentioned and keep it visible on the board or chart paper.

## PART TWO: THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Students will select and focus attention on ONE Twin Cities' based organization or person acknowledged for their commitment to help and support people in our community. They will:

- Learn more about the work they do.
  - Who they serve, why they do it and why their contributions are important.
  - What contributions they make to the community.
1. Distribute copies of the **Leading with Love Research Project and List of People/Organizations Instruction Sheet**, included with this lesson. Students will investigate, collect information, and report their findings. They can gather information from multiple sources, including:
    - Visiting the organization's website.
    - Do 'key word' web searches information and articles about the person or the organization.
    - Ask family, friends, teachers, and others what they know or have experienced.
    - Visit, if possible, the organization's location to see what's going on.
    - If possible, request an interview with the person or a leader or representative of the organization as a primary resource.
    - Collect materials from the organization about their work, including brochures, flyers, pamphlets, etc.
  2. Students will then investigate, collect information, take notes and organize their data on the **Research Organizer** worksheet included with this lesson, and then be prepared to report out their findings. They will summarize their person or organization's vision and mission, what they do, who they serve, and the impact they have in the community.
  3. Review the questions and areas of interest with students to clarify how they will use it the information gathered. Set a date for completing their project.

Another, more creative approach to report their findings is to create a **Swift Summary** display of their organization's name and a single sentence about their impact. Students may wish to include images of their person/organization, illustrations, informational captions, primary resources and other materials collected on a poster-board that can be displayed in the classroom. Here's an illustration of how it might look. Make up a header such as: A SHOUT OUT to Those Who are **Leading with Love** in the Twin Cities.



Poster from **Mapping Black Joy**, <https://www.healingjusticefoundation.org/about-us>.

## EXTEND

- ☺ Ask your students what service projects they are engaged in now, or have worked on in the past. This includes projects and activities in school, neighborhoods, churches, etc. Recognize their involvement and invite them to briefly describe the project and what they do to support it. This includes simple kind actions such as walking an elderly neighbor's dog, organizing games for young neighborhood children, helping with yard work, serving food at a soup kitchen, organizing clothing drives to give to unsheltered members of our community, church related projects — and more. **Children do good things for their communities.**
- ☺ If your school sponsors speakers from organizations connected and committed to working with people with needs, remind students of those guests and their messages.
- ☺ Consider taking on a classroom project where all students focus on supporting a community outcome.

# LEADING WITH LOVE RESEARCH PROJECT

## INSTRUCTIONS AND LIST OF LEADERS

### INSTRUCTIONS

**Leading with Love** is a very BIG IDEA. One way that people in a community lead with love is through the organizations they start (found) and run for the community.

Here is a list of a small number of organizations known for their leadership, kindness, and efforts to make the Twin Cities a better place to live.

Your task is to research and learn about ONE organization or person. Do this by searching the web for articles and more details, asking people who know them for their insights, visiting in person if possible, and talking to or interviewing someone who works there. Write what you learn on the **Research Organizer** worksheet and share it with the class.

We hope that through this research project, you will be inspired to become a role model to others, always leading with love and caring for your fellow community members, friends, family and neighbors!

### LIST OF INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO RESEARCH & REPORT ON

200 Black Leaders you should know about:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/twincities/news/2023/02/23/minneapolis-st-paul-black-leaders-4.html>

Sharon Sayles Belton, first African American Mayor of Minneapolis

Melvin Carter, first African American Mayor of St. Paul

Andrea Jenkins, first African American and Transgender Minneapolis City Council President

Dr. Josie Johnson: <https://www.thehistorymakers.org/biography/josie-johnson-39>

100 Black Men Twin Cities: <https://www.100bmtc.org/>

African American Leadership Forum: <https://aalftc.org>

Cookie Cart: <https://cookiecart.org/>

Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ): <https://www.northsideachievement.org/>

A Mother's Love Initiative: <https://www.amothersloveinitiative.org>

TruArt Speaks and Tish Jones: <https://www.truartspeaks.org/>

Joe Davis Poet, Activist and Spoken Word Artist: <https://www.joedavispoetry.com/>

Juxtaposition Arts: <https://juxtapositionarts.org/>

Walker West Music Academy, St. Paul MN: Music education access for all students. Founded by Rev. Carl Walker, and Grant West, this music organization has become a "rock" for the Rondo Neighborhood. <https://walkerwest.org/>

Sweet Potato Comfort Pie, founded by Rose McGee, artist, performer, and outstanding baker. It has become a catalyst for expressing caring communities. <https://www.sweetpotatocomfortpie.org/about/>

Mapping Black Joy: <https://www.healingjusticefoundation.org/about-us>.

This organization is dedicated to a vision: **May all Black lives be healed, liberated and whole** and a mission to: **reclaim the inherent dignity, brilliance, and humanity of all Black people.**

VocalEssence WITNESS Teaching Artists: <https://www.vocalescence.org/who-we-are/staff/> (scroll down under "Teaching Artists" for their bios)

Penumbra Theater Company's Racial Healing Initiative: <https://penumbratheatre.org/racial-healing/>

Sabathani Community Center, Inc: <https://sabathani.org/>

Hallie Q. Brown Community Center: <https://www.hallieqbrown.org/site/>

Phyllis Wheatley Community Center: <https://www.phylliswheatley.org/>

# RESEARCH ORGANIZER: PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONS WHO LEAD WITH LOVE

Name of the organization/person

I am researching:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Who do they serve and/or support?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

List 3 things they do to serve or benefit the community...

1

\_\_\_\_\_

2

\_\_\_\_\_

3

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in learning more and sharing about them because...

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_