“Who Can Make a Difference?”
A lesson plan to accompany “The Color of Conscience”

Middle School Level
Approximately two one-hour class periods are required to complete this lesson

I. **Content:** I want my students to:

   A. understand that they have the power to make a difference.
   B. consider that a small group of people can influence multitudes.

II. **Prerequisites:** Students should be familiar with:

   A. basic knowledge of the events and impact of the Holocaust.
   B. basic knowledge of journaling.

III. **Instructional Objective:** The student will:

   A. Reflect on and respond to questions posed by the teacher regarding who can make a difference in their world.
   B. Share their thoughts verbally about who can make a difference.
   C. Watch two video segments totaling 35 minutes.
   D. Identify problems in their school or community.
   E. Come up with ideas for solutions to these problems.
   F. Share their ideas for addressing problems in their school or community.
   G. Vote as a class for those solutions they believe they can put into action.
   H. Journal their reflections and thoughts on the experience they are having through this process.

IV. **Materials and Equipment:**

   Documentary *Color of Conscience*-Idaho Public Television, available online at:
   
   http://idahoptv.org/productions/specials/colorofconscience/ or
   
   http://video.idahoptv.org/video/1949293974/

   Writing journals

   Pencils

   Smart board with internet access or a television and DVD player

   White/chalk board with markers/chalk and erasers
V. **Instructional Procedures:**

A. Ask the students to reply in their journal to the following questions: “Can one small group of people influence hundreds or thousands of other people?” Give them a couple of minutes to reflect and reply. Then ask, “Could this influence work for good or for bad or both? Can you think of any specific situations?” Give the students 5-10 minutes to reflect and respond.

B. Show two video clips from “The Color of Conscience.”

Program can be found at: [http://video.idahoptv.org/video/1949293974/](http://video.idahoptv.org/video/1949293974/) or [http://idahoptv.org/colorofconscience](http://idahoptv.org/colorofconscience)

**Clip one:** From the start of the program to 27:00 (Outcue: “speak out.”)

**Clip two:** 49:38 (incue: the three major white supremacy websites) to the end of the program at 57:35.

C. Ask the students to reflect again on the question, “Can one small group of people influence hundreds or thousands of other people?” Have them write in their journals about examples from the documentary.

D. Ask the students to reflect on the question: “Does it take a special kind of person to make a difference?” Have the students write in their journals their thoughts about the people they saw in the documentary.

E. Ask the students to discuss what they wrote in their journals.

F. After the discussion, inform the students their homework for the next two days is to identify problems in their school and community and to think about how these issues can be changed. If they can’t identify one on the local level, they may use a situation they have seen or hear about on the news. However, local issues should be encouraged to keep the lesson more focused. The student should record violations and possible solutions in their journals. Simple lists will do. The problems and solutions will be discussed in class. Ask the students not to use peer names.

G. In class, invite students to share their findings on any problems identified. Reiterate that students should not use other students’ names in their writings and discussion. Put the problems on the whiteboard.

H. Ask the students to share their ideas for solutions to the listed problems.

I. After the students share their solutions, vote for the top three solutions that they believe, as a class, they could put into action. At the white board, begin planning the process by having the students dictate their ideas for proceeding while the teacher lists them on the board. Write the process in a numbered order so the students may see clearly how to carry out their plan of action. It may be as simple as individuals taking a stand and saying something when they see a right being violated to writing letters to local legislators, or to a more difficult task like starting a Human Rights Club at their school.

J. Inform the students that they will be writing about their experiences concerning “making a difference” in their journals over the next three weeks. It is suggested that they write at least twice a week, but may write every day.
VI. Assessment/Evaluation:

Teachers should apply their own rubric for scoring. It is suggested that the students will be evaluated on their thoughtfulness in their content of their journal writings and also their penmanship. They should address each item on the following check list:

Did they respond to the questions posed by the teacher in class?
Did they make an effort to participate in class discussion?
Did they identify a problem and suggest a solution to the problem?
Did they reflect in their journals on their experience with making a difference at least twice weekly for the past three weeks?
Did they write in legible cursive?

VII. Idaho Content Standards:

Social Studies
Goal 5.1: Build an Understanding of Multiple Perspectives and Global Interdependence.

Language Arts
Standards 3: Writing Process: Goal 3.5: Acquire Skills to Publish Writing.
Standard 4 Writing Application: Goal 4.1: Acquire Expressive (Narrative/Creative) Writing Skills
Standard 4 Writing Application: Goal 4.4: Acquire Skills for Literary Response
Standard 5 Writing Components: Goal 5.1: Acquire Handwriting Skills

VIII. Follow-Up Activities:

A. Each student will complete an art project. The students will take their experience from the last few weeks and express their feelings through visual art. They will be given the choice to create a piece of art that expresses the idea of “making a difference.” They will also be required to submit an artist's statement along with their art piece.

B. Each student will complete a verbal art project. The students write a poem or short story that reflects their experience with this “making this difference” lesson. They may use their journal entries to recall their experiences and feelings.

C. The art, both verbal and visual, may be displayed for the school. The following quote from Margaret Mead should be displayed above the art, large enough for students and teachers to see as they walk down the halls: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”