Title of Lesson Plan: What Would You Risk? Standing Up For What’s Right in the Face of Incarceration

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Grade Level: 7-12

Synopsis/Summary of Lesson:
In this lesson, students will learn about Fred T. Korematsu’s acts of resistance and will practice creative and critical thinking about the risks, rewards, and consequences of standing up for one’s beliefs. The lesson involves a personal writing activity, a short reading assignment about Fred Korematsu’s resistance, a reading comprehension and critical thinking worksheet about the Korematsu story, and finally a dice-based game to be played in groups. The lesson could be done in 45 minutes if students are not required to answer every question in great depth. However, the lesson could be extended to several class periods using the Extension Activities provided.

Background Introduction:
On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which gave the U.S. military the power to forcibly incarcerate 120,000 Japanese Americans in temporary holding areas such as horse racetracks and later in ten concentration camps spread throughout the country in desolate areas. Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu, a man who initially resisted the mandatory order, was incarcerated in Millard County, Utah. Later he fought the order’s constitutionality in a Supreme Court case. Many recent academics, activists, and filmmakers have made powerful efforts to emphasize how many Japanese Americans resisted their incarceration in order to disrupt the U.S. media’s propaganda that Japanese Americans “willingly” went to the camps “for their country.” This activity puts students in hypothetical situations of moral and legal dilemmas with the goal of building empathy and solidarity with those who have historically resisted unjust practices and laws.

Possible Units to Use With: World War II; Civil Rights Era; Asian American History; Incarceration Studies

Focus/Essential Question(s): What historical significance can result from one person’s actions?

Objectives:
1. Develop knowledge of the motivation behind civic actions taken to make a difference
2. Assess ethical values and the social contexts of ethical dilemmas
C3 Framework Standards:
D2.His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.
D2.His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

Required Materials and Preparation:
- Appendices A, B, C, and D (one copy per student)
- 6-sided dice (two dice for every group, groups of 3-4 students)

Procedure:
1. Give students Appendix A and have them work individually to answer as many questions as they would like within a given timeframe. Allow students to respond to any questions that they wish or in any order.
2. Have students discuss their answers in small groups of 3-4, making sure each student has an opportunity to share at least one prepared answer before moving on to the next step. Allow students to keep their written responses private or to only share selective responses.
3. Call class back together and introduce the subject question for the lesson: “What would you protect or fight for, even in the face of going to jail for your actions?” Explain that today’s lesson will begin by learning about Fred T. Korematsu and his fight against an unjust military order during World War II, which led to his incarceration.
4. Give students Appendix B and have them read it.
5. Have students complete Appendix C. Solicit some answers from students.
6. Distribute dice to groups of 3 or 4 and have students play the “What Would You Risk?” game on Appendix D. Make sure each student has enough time to roll the dice, receive a scenario, and share their choices. This game can be played numerous times as it lends itself to over a hundred permutations of scenarios. Groups can also be shifted so that students can share answers with different people. If no physical dice are available, the website Random.org has a “dice roll simulator” that can effectively replace dice.

Differentiated Engagement Strategies for Accessibility of All Students:
Procedure Steps 4 and 5 using Appendices B and C could be assigned as homework the night before this lesson takes place in class. This allows students more time to process the reading and answer questions effectively. This also frees up class time for more discussion and the playing of the game. This approach would also be particularly useful for students who receive accommodations regarding printed reading material and allotted time for reading.
**Extension Activity:**

After receiving a scenario from the “What Would You Risk?” dice game, students could prepare a more elaborate response to the question. This response could take the form of:

- A diary
- A visual presentation outlining the pros/cons of their decision and their ultimate choice
- A role play (prepared or improvised) between the student and a loved one where the student explains their decision to their partner
- A screenplay or storyboard of the decision-making process and possible projected consequences
- A research project where students find a related news story in which a person’s act of resistance mirrors/resembles the act in their scenario. Possible famous examples include Malala Yousafzai’s persecution for seeking education, *Loving v. Virginia* ruling on antimiscegenation laws, etc.

More specifically and relevantly, since students are putting themselves in these situations by playing the game, they could research teenagers who have resisted and learn what risks they faced. One source could be *The Guardian’s* October 18, 2013 online article “Beyond Malala: Six Teenagers Changing the World” ([www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/18/teenagers-changing-world-malala-yousafzai](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/18/teenagers-changing-world-malala-yousafzai)), which introduces Zhan Haite, a Chinese middle school student who spoke out about China’s *hukou* residence registration system and suffered consequences such as being evicted and having her father jailed.
Appendix A

Directions: Answer any of these questions that you like. You do not need to answer all of them.

1. What do you imagine prison is like? Describe it using words, images, sentences, or by drawing pictures.

2. Write three true statements that begin with “I value […],” “I need […],” or “I believe in […].” Follow these statements with a concrete or abstract noun, such as “my family” or “freedom.”

3. What does the word “unfair” mean to you? Give some examples (general or specific) to illustrate.
Appendix B: Fred T. Korematsu

Fred Toyosaburo Korematsu was born in Oakland, California, on January 30, 1919. He was the third of four sons to Japanese immigrant parents who ran a floral nursery business in Oakland, California.

After the U.S. entered World War II, Korematsu tried to enlist in the U.S. National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard, but he was turned away by military officers who discriminated against him due to his Japanese ancestry. Korematsu then trained to become a welder, eventually working at the docks in Oakland as a shipyard welder and quickly rising through the ranks to foreman. One day, when he arrived to punch in his time card, Korematsu found a notice to report to the union office, where he was suddenly fired from his job due to his Japanese ancestry.

The Japanese military forces bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941. Consequently, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, which authorized the U.S. military to remove over 120,000 people of Japanese descent, the majority of whom were American citizens, from their homes and force them into American prison camps throughout the United States.

Fred Korematsu chose to defy the demands of the Executive Order and instead carried on his life as an American citizen. He underwent minor plastic surgery to alter his eyes in an attempt to look less Japanese. He also changed his name to Clyde Sarah and claimed to be of Spanish and Hawaiian descent. On May 30, 1942, he was arrested on a street corner in San Leandro, California, and taken to San Francisco county jail. While in jail, he was visited by Ernest Besig, the director of the San Francisco office of the American Civil Liberties Union, who asked Korematsu if he was willing to become the test case to challenge the constitutionality of the government’s imprisonment of Japanese Americans. On September 8, 1942, Korematsu was convicted in federal court for violating the military orders issued under Executive Order 9066. He was placed on a five-year probation. For several months, he lived at the Tanforan “Assembly Center” in San Bruno, CA, one of the former horse-racing tracks where Japanese Americans were first held before being sent to the more permanent American concentration camps. Korematsu and his family were transferred from Tanforan to Topaz, Utah, where the government had set up one of 10 incarceration camps for Japanese Americans.

Following World War II and the release of Japanese Americans from the concentration camps, Korematsu attempted to resume life as an American citizen. He moved to Detroit, Michigan where his youngest brother resided. There, he met his soon-to-be wife, Kathryn, a student at Wayne State University who was originally from South Carolina. At the time, anti-miscegenation laws prohibited interracial marriage in states including California and South Carolina, but mixed-race marriage was legal in Michigan. Fred and Kathryn Korematsu married
in Detroit before moving to the San Francisco Bay Area in 1949, where they raised two children, Karen and Ken.

Adapted from Fred Korematsu’s full biography on the Fred T. Korematsu Institute website (www.korematsuinstitute.org/fred-t-korematsu-lifetime).
Appendix C: Reading Comprehension

1. Why was Fred Korematsu denied the opportunity to serve in the United States military?

2. What consequences did President Franklin Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066 have for Japanese Americans?

3. What was the Tanforan “Assembly Center” used for before the government repurposed it as a jail?

4. What does “anti-miscegenation” mean?

Critical Thinking

1. How do you think Fred Korematsu felt after being fired from his job as a welding foreman? Why?

2. Fred Korematsu received plastic surgery on his eyes in the 1940s to try to hide his identity. Why do you think he would choose to alter his appearance?

3. How do you think Japanese Americans felt being held in stalls for horses?

4. Would you move from one state to another in order to marry the person you love? Why or why not?
Appendix D: “What Would You Risk?” Game

**Directions**: Roll two dice together. The sum tells you what new law on the chart is prohibiting you from doing something. Next, roll two dice together again. The sum tells you the punishment for breaking that law. Discuss with your group whether you would take the risk and break the law or not and why.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>A new law prohibits you from…</th>
<th>Anyone caught breaking this law will…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Marrying the person you love</td>
<td>Be required to perform 300 hours of community service picking up trash in parks, planting trees, and cleaning up graffiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Going to the school or university of your choice</td>
<td>Be forced to pay a fine of $500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Buying or renting a home somewhere you like</td>
<td>Be forced to forfeit all of their possessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Shopping or dining at your favorite business</td>
<td>Be required to put a sign in their yard, home windows, and/or on a car bumper sticker announcing their crime to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Worshipping at your church, temple, etc.</td>
<td>Be sentenced to 3 days in the city jail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Communicating with your extended family</td>
<td>Be forced to pay 25% of your wages made for the rest of their life back to the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Reading the books/websites of your choice</td>
<td>Be placed on house arrest for 6 months using a wrist-worn electronic transmitter, only allowing them to leave the house between 8am-6pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Receiving a certain medical treatment/procedure</td>
<td>Be sent to a military boot camp for 6 months to learn discipline and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Using/owning a laptop/cell phone/technology</td>
<td>Lose their rights to live in the United States and be deported to another country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Getting the job/training of your choice</td>
<td>Be sent to a federal penitentiary for twelve years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Wearing the clothing/accessories of your choice</td>
<td>Be sent to a federal penitentiary and ultimately sentenced to death</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

What would you risk?