

## Women and Nonviolent Resistance

### **Warm up:**

**Consider the following:** Have you ever witnessed something unjust? Maybe you have seen governmental corruption or violence in your community? If you haven't witnessed something personally, you may have seen reports of injustice on the news. If you could respond in any way to that injustice, what would you do?

Then, **respond to the following questions:**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| What was the injustice you witnessed?  |  |
| What do you think needs to change to prevent such an injustice from occurring in the future? |  |
| Did you take any steps to address the injustice at the time when you witnessed it?           |  |
| Looking back now, how would you respond?   |  |

### **Introducing the Lesson:**

Throughout history, and to this day, women around the world engage in **nonviolent resistance** to unjust practices. Nonviolent resistance can be defined as the process of achieving social change through protest, political or social organizing, and noncooperation.

You are going to explore one of four stories about women who continue this practice today. The stories you will look at show some of the challenges and violence being faced around the world. They can be stories of interpersonal violence (violence committed by one individual or a group of individuals) or violence sanctioned and committed by governments and corporations around the world. The injustices these women face vary, as do their responses. Nonviolent resistance can be seen in the form of social media campaigns, education efforts, and organizing.

Think about how you see these efforts playing out in each article and in the world around you.

### **Introducing the Resources:**

Choose one of the four articles below to read, and then answer the comprehension questions listed below.

| Topic   | Article   |
|---|---|
| <b>Voting</b>                                       | “The Rising Voices of Women in Pakistan”  |
| <b>Pollution</b>                                    | “The Woman Risking Her Life to Save a Village from Lead Poisoning”                  |
| <b>Peacebuilding and Education</b>                  | “In Post-Conflict Colombia, Imprisoned Ex-Combatants Help Maintain a Fragile Peace” |
| <b>Peacebuilding and Education: Gender Equality</b> | “The Saudi Women Who Fought for the Right to Drive”                                 |

#### Comprehension Questions:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Why did the women in the story you read care about what was happening? |  |
| What do you think you might have done in a similar situation?          |  |
| Are their actions leading to long-term change?                         |  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
| What are the nonviolent means being used and do you think that they are effective?   |  |
| What injustice or violence are being addressed by these women (or this woman)? What methods of nonviolent resistance are they using? |  |
| What obstacles are they facing as a result of their work?  |  |
| What, if anything, is changing as a result of their work?  |  |
| What did you find most interesting about this article?   |  |

### **Extension Activity 1:**

Read the other three articles listed in this lesson and answer the following questions for each article. Use the boxes below for the second article, and then respond on a separate sheet of paper for the third and fourth articles.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Do any of the injustices these women are working against feel like they could happen in your community? |  |
| What do you think you would do if you were in the same situation?                                       |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>What types of nonviolent resistance do you see in your own community? How are they similar to and different from the ones in the articles you read?</p>  |  |
| <p>How do the types of resistance shared by your classmates compare? Do you think the methods you read about in the article you read could be applied to a situation described by your classmates?</p>                            |  |
| <p>Why do you think that the women you read about are using the specific method of nonviolent resistance they chose?</p>  |  |
| <p>Think back to the situation you brought up in the warm-up for this lesson and share if you feel comfortable. Having discussed the experiences and actions of these women, would change your own response to the injustice?</p> |  |

### **Extension Activity 2:**

Check out these [Official Women's History Month Biographies](#) page to learn more about women in history who used nonviolent methods to fight injustice. Pick a woman from this page to do some deeper research on and write your own news article about her, answering the questions you explored with your articles for today. Send your article to [education@pultizercenter.org](mailto:education@pultizercenter.org) or share it on Instagram or Twitter, tagging @pulitzer.

### **Extension Activity 3:**

If you are inspired by these women to fight injustice in your own community, take action! First, identify the injustice you are most passionate about fighting against. Then, decide what form of nonviolent resistance is most suitable to your cause. Consider the following options:

- Designing a social media campaign
- Writing letters to you representatives and encouraging others to do the same

- Demonstrating at your school or in a public space (with the appropriate permits and permissions)
- Writing a news article about the issue using interviews with people who are directly involved in working to end the injustice, or people who may not see the issue the same way you do. Be sure to share the finished piece with [education@pulitzercenter.org](mailto:education@pulitzercenter.org) and on social media, tagging @pulitzer