

## Session 11 – Violence in the Nation

### Activity 1 – Jena 6

When the genre of HipHop/Rap music first began it was used to address social issues in the black community. Recent events in Jena, Louisiana have drawn the attention of the nation. In an effort to bring the world's attention to this situation Jasiri X created the Rap song below. Read the lyrics. Does this song tell a story? Write about the feelings that come up after reading the lyrics. Do you need to hear the music to understand the artist's message? What questions arise after reading the lyrics to the song? Write a review of Jasiri X's song Jena 6. Tell him what you think of his expression of what is happening in Jena, Louisiana.

#### JENA 6

Justice for Everybody Not African  
Indians and Latin kids lock them up and pack them in  
Crime pays so the DA will trap them in  
It's the new millennium slave trafficking  
Call Weezy, Call Baby, Call BG, Call Juvenile,  
Mannie Fresh, Call Master P  
Soulja Slim would have rode but he in the ground  
Somebody call Young Turk he 'bout to get out  
Call Romeo he ballin' on a scholarship  
Don't be silenced by record label politics  
Original Man so I'll be the genesis you know what the  
mission is:  
We gonna FREE THE JENA 6

Jena, Louisiana they call it the Deep South  
In other words black folks keep out  
Or stay in your place its OK if you're playing it safe  
Or a wide grin stay on your face  
Kids raised to hate  
Before age 8 they learn to tie nooses this is what a lie  
produces  
And 10 years later you beside the student in high  
school  
In his mind you're a visitor N---- it's my school  
This is my room don't you even try coon  
It sets the stage for a showdown at high noon  
Lunchtime in the cafeteria one mind thinking blacks  
inferior  
One time under a tree that cracks the exterior and  
reveals the truth  
Must of forgot that you're still a spook  
You'll remember when you see this noose see this tree  
was used

It's on now its white vs. black like a war  
A black kid was jumped it opened the door  
A white man pulled a shotgun at a convenience  
store on black children  
They didn't put their hands to the ceiling  
They disarmed the man and then ran from the  
building  
Unless you're born black you can't understand  
the feeling  
They beat that boy down they never planned to  
kill him  
Them young brothers just wanted to defend they  
friends  
And in the end to suspend is all it should have  
been  
But they went further  
They was charged as grown men for attempted  
murder  
For a fight in high school  
They were made an example in Jena that whites  
rule  
And you won't see this on the Nightly News  
Cause they'll likely choose dog fighting and  
blues  
Michael Vick being stripped of his lightning  
shoes  
Not 6 teenagers being charged despite the rules  
Or a racist prosecutor trying to take our future  
This is madness children behind bars this is  
savage  
As we spend money on cars, jewelry and fabric  
Our children need our help to heal this damage  
When you don't speak the truth watch your  
realness vanish

To hang your ancestors after we'd party and barbecue  
This led to rising tension when the ones who did it got  
a brief suspension

And you know our spirit we will not surrender we  
always fight back

So sign the petition organize for the victims  
Please give your money, your time, and your wisdom  
And to Mychal Bell we're gonna fight for your  
freedom

And we want a million dollars for every night you  
keep him

It's Justice for Everybody Not African  
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Jena 6 – Song review

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### Activity 2 – Stereotypes

Jisu Yoo is a 14 year old middle school student. Below is a post he made directly following the Virginia Tech massacre. Read Jisu Yoo's post. Do you agree with his post? Do you believe everyone plays a part in trying to prevent violent events like what happened at Virginia Tech? Get in groups of 3 or 4 and develop a way that school administration can be notified of potential problem students.

I woke up at nine during my second day of spring break because my mom kept chattering about something. I didn't know what it was about so I went outside and heard my mom talking about some dude who shot people at his college. I didn't really care. Shootings around the world were a typical issue and I heard it everywhere, in the news and newspapers. But the mention of a Korean boy stopped me from going back to sleep. I wasn't being nationalist or racist or anything, but to hear that a Korean boy had done something like that in America was crucifying. My mom kept going on about what she'd heard on the radio. A Korean student in his 20s shot people at Virginia Tech. My mom predicted that he was lonely boy who had been betrayed by a girlfriend or his friend. I thought my mother had watched too many Korean dramas. The news must be mistaken, I thought, it must be a Chinese or Japanese man, or any other kind of Asian that had done it.

My sister and I were curious to find out more, so we searched the Internet. It turned out that we didn't even need to search. As soon as my sister typed [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com), there was Cho Seung-Hui's picture on the front page with headlines that read "Virginia Shooting Leaves 33 Dead" and "Virginia Gunman Identified as Student." It was bizarre. Every news web site had his picture and every Korean radio station was talking about it. It was the deadliest mass shooting in American history and it had been committed by a Korean. My mother and sister talked about our reputation as Koreans. "How will we raise our faces to society?" my mom said. "I'm Chinese!" my sister yelled as a joke. My mom said we should pray for the young people that died and Seung-Hui as well. I didn't think he would like that very much seeing that one of the things he resented was his religion, Christianity.

Looking at the headlines now, I think the people that wrote them are overreacting: "Chilling picture of Virginia Tech gunman emerges" to "Like Something Out of a Nightmare." I didn't think he looked scary and people should've been more kind to him. I also don't think it right that the newspapers should call him "a sullen loner who alarmed professors and classmates with his twisted, violence-drenched creative writing." "He was a loner," school spokesman Larry Hincker told [ABC News](http://abcnews.com). I don't think they even knew him and his life so they had no right to say that. Loners don't become loners because they want to; I believe it is society that does it. I don't understand how, now that he's killed and committed suicide, people are recognizing who he is.

As endless information is being revealed, I pity Cho Seung-Hui and the people he killed. Both of them were victims; Seung-Hui of society and the ones killed were victims of Seung-Hui's acts. I don't agree with what Seung-Hui did nor do I approve of his acts, but I do think something should've been done to help him. Sure, I read of professors who were concerned, but no student really tried to reach out to him.

In the news, Koreans are worried that their reputation might be ruined and foreigners will discriminate against them. I don't think that's right. If a Korean person does something, it doesn't mean all Koreans are madmen. It also doesn't mean that because Afghanistan terrorists bombed the World Trade Centers that all Afghanistan people are terrorists. People are way over-reactive about races and should get a reality check on their stereotypes.

—**Jisu Yoo, 14, Wilson MS (Glendale)** *Posted Wednesday, April 18*

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### Activity 3 – Heroes in Tragedy

Do you know someone who has been a hero during trying times? In instances of tragedies there are unsung heroes who put themselves in harms way in order to save lives. In our grief, we sometimes forget to be grateful for them. Read the article below.

**BLACKSBURG, Virginia** (CNN) -- When student gunman Seung-Hui Cho went on a rampage at Virginia Tech, killing 32 people before turning a gun on himself, students and teachers had to make split-second decisions.

Senior Zach Petkewicz and others in his class in Norris Hall on April 16 threw up a table against a door to form a barricade to keep out the gunman.

"He came to our door, tried the handle and couldn't get in because we were pushing up against it," said Petkewicz.

"[He] tried to force his way in and got the door to open up six inches and then we just lunged at it and closed it back up. ... That's when he backed up and shot twice into the middle of the door thinking we were up against it trying to get him out."

That barricade saved their lives.

In nearby Room 204 of Norris Hall, Liviu Librescu was doing a slide show for his engineering students when gunshots rang out a couple of classrooms away.

Librescu's students say their 76-year-old professor moved quickly, blocking the door to give his class time to escape. Two were wounded, but all survived -- all except Professor Librescu.

Librescu's son, in Israel, said he is not surprised that his father, who survived the Holocaust, would act with such bravery.

"I knew that he ... he's going to take action ... he's going to do something not normal, definitely not something cowardice, something ... he wouldn't have taken cover, for sure," said Joe Librescu.

On Friday, Librescu was laid to rest in Ra'nana, Israel, surrounded by hundreds of family members and friends and honored as a hero.

"We would like to thank you, professor Librescu," said Ra'nana Mayor Ze'ev Beilski. "In your death you saved life of many other people."

Ryan Clark also didn't run for cover, students said. He was a resident assistant at the dormitory where

the first shooting occurred. Students said he was rushing to investigate when he was killed.

Known for his smile, Clark pursued three majors and made time for charity work. His twin brother and sister say the world lost an angel.

"He was always ready and willing to give for somebody else," said Bryan Clark.

Added Nadia Clark, "Basically what my brother said ...an angel ...someone who would have been great to this world. All he wanted to do was help children and other people, so they just lost someone who's really, really caring and really genuine all the time."

Asked what he would say to those who call him a hero, Petkewicz looked away, began blinking rapidly, shrugged his shoulders, shook his head back and forth, removed his right hand from the pocket of his blue jeans and used it to stroke his forehead, then said in a voice choked with emotion, "I'm just glad I could be here."

Can you suggest 3 thoughtful and creative ways to memorialize brave heroes in the face of tragedy?

1.

2.

3.