

JANE ADDAMS

Lesbian U.S. Social Justice Pioneer (1860-1935)



*"America's future will be determined by the home and the school.
The child becomes largely what he is taught;
hence we must watch what we teach, and how we live."*

– Jane Addams

In the 1880's, while in England, Addams discovered settlement houses – homes located in city slums where social workers “settled” to provide services to the surrounding community – which led to her hypothesis that physical and social landscapes can influence the fate of subcultures. In 1889 she co-founded Hull House in Chicago, one of the first settlement houses in the United States. A leading feminist and suffragette, she called attention to poverty, child labor, public health reform, race relations, adverse working conditions, and prostitution among poor urban women. Addams, a life-long pacifist, was elected president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in 1915. In 1920 she was instrumental in establishing the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and later published the controversial *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922). In recognition of these efforts and a lifetime dedicated to advancing social justice, Jane Addams was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, the second woman in history to receive the honor. A champion of those who lived on the margins, her ideas continue to influence social, political and economic reform in the United States and throughout the world. The love of her life, Mary Rozet Smith, arrived at Hull House in 1889 and supported Addams life and work through a relationship that endured more than 40 years.

Lesson Plan

Level 1: Contributions Approach

1. Activate prior experience: What do you know about settlement houses that were established by Addams during the late 1800's? Why were these significant to our social landscape?
2. Read the biographical information.
3. Group Discussion: How would you describe the Addams's activism?
4. For further information about the social impact of settlement houses, review <http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/addams6.htm>

Level 2: Additive Approach

1. Investigate the work of suffragettes and feminists who wanted the right to vote in the United States.
2. Website Investigation: Examine another activist who was revolutionary to social justice causes through the following: http://legacyprojectchicago.org/Social_Justice.html
3. Describe any similarities or differences in their personal commitment to service to others.

Level 3: Transformational Approach

1. Examine the historical narrative of Addam's influence on urban society in Chicago and beyond in the following: http://tigger.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/urbanexp/main.cgi?file=new/historical_narrative_contents.ptt
2. Why was Jane Addams a controversial figure during this time?

Level 4: Social Action Approach

1. If Addams were alive today, which social justice causes would she be involved with and why?
2. Extend knowledge on the Nobel Prize received by Addams. Read the biography at http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1931/addams-bio.html#
3. Did her “private” life play a supporting role in her service to others? Review the following: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/addams-jane/>
4. Who today would you believe exemplifies Addams' values?