

Learning Activities

Historical Figures

Instructions:

1. Read the following information about historical figures in healthcare advocacy and care coordination in the Judeo-Christian and other faith traditions, especially in the modern era.
2. Discuss the questions below either as a large group or in small groups, depending on the number of participants.

Questions:

1. Which historical person motivates you the most to be an advocate and do health care coordination?
2. Which historical example could be applied to your faith community?
3. Who are the health care advocates in your local community?

In the **Hebrew faith**, Moses is a primary historical figure. In Exodus 3, we read that he did not feel capable of helping the Israelites in bondage, yet the overarching story of his life is fulfilling his call from God and leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt.

Often the work of the prophets was to advocate and coordinate for the well-being of individuals or the nation. For instance, Elisha advocated for the widow whose two sons were about to be taken into slavery by calling on God for oil she could sell, and he advocated for the life of the Shunammite woman's son who had died (2 Kings 4:1–37).

In the **Christian faith**, Scripture describes Jesus and the Holy Spirit as advocates (John 14:26; 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25). Many healing miracles also show individuals in the role of advocate for other people. For example, Jairus begged Jesus to heal his daughter (Luke 8:40–42, 49–56); the centurion asked Jesus to heal his servant from afar (Matthew 8:5–13); the apostle Paul had a ministry of healing (Acts 28:7–10).

Florence Nightingale, during the nineteenth century, developed the concept of district nursing and home visitation of the sick.

- She also brought environmental and sanitation issues into the foreground of health care.
- Nightingale advocated for proper care and hygiene of soldiers in the Crimean War and on their return to their country.
- She developed St. Thomas' Hospital School for Nurses to educate nurses about the importance of proper hygiene in disease prevention.

Lillian Wald is another nineteenth-century nurse, well-known for adopting the settlement house concept as the most effective way to bring health care to poor immigrant populations.

- Nurses lived and worked among the poor.
- Wald emphasized health promotion and political activism in her work at the Henry Street Settlement House. She coined the term *public health nursing*.
- Wald obtained payment for visiting nurse services in New York City from the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, a program that was successful after three months and extended nationwide.
- She lobbied for the first White House Conference on Children and Youth, which resulted in the school nursing model.
- Wald convinced the Red Cross to expand peacetime efforts to rural America, leading to the establishment of the Rural Nursing Service.

- **Martin Luther King, Jr.** (January 15, 1929–April 4, 1968) was an American pastor, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American civil rights movement. He is best known for his role in the advancement of civil rights using nonviolent civil disobedience based on his Christian beliefs.
- **Desmond Tutu** (born October 7, 1931) is a South African social rights activist and retired Anglican bishop who rose to worldwide fame during the 1980s as an opponent of apartheid. He was the first black Archbishop of Cape Town and bishop of the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (now the Anglican Church of Southern Africa).
- **Mahatma Gandhi** (October 2, 1869–January 30, 1948) was the preeminent leader of Indian nationalism in British-ruled India. Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.
- **Pope John Paul II** (May 18, 1920–April 2, 2005) was the 264th pope of the Catholic church from October 16, 1978 until his death. John Paul II is recognized as helping to end communist rule in his native Poland and eventually all of Europe.