

Introducing Martin Luther King Jr. and His Dream

A Unit for Kindergarten through Grade 2

Adapted from EDSITEment!

Introduction

In this series of lessons, students will learn about the life and work of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. Using the provided books, *A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.* by David A. Adler and *If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King*, by Ellen Levine, the Power Point Presentation developed by the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum, and a template for Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream Mobiles," from the National Constitution Center, students will read a biography, view photos, listen to a portion of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech, and create their own "I Have a Dream" mobiles based on inequities that still exist in our society today.

MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education History and Social Science Content Standards:

Kindergarten:

Topic 1. Civics: classroom citizenship

- 1-2. Take on responsibilities and follow through on them, being helpful to and respectful of others (e.g., volunteer for and carry out tasks in the classroom and at home).
- 1-3. With prompting and support, give examples from literature and informational texts read or read aloud of characters who show authority, fairness, caring, justice, responsibility, or who show how rules are created and followed
- 1-4. Ask and answer questions and explore books to gain information about national symbols, songs, and texts of the United States.

Grade 1:

Topic 1. Civics: communities, elections, and leadership

- 1-1. Demonstrate understanding of the benefits of being part of a group and explain what it means to be a member of a group; follow the group's rules, limits, responsibilities and expectations, and explain reasons for rules to others.
- 1-2. Investigate the various roles that members of a group play and explain how those roles contribute to achieving a common goal.
- 1-3. Demonstrate understanding that a leader is also a member of a group but takes on a different role with more responsibility for inspiring others, organizing and delegating activities, and helping the group make decisions.

1-4. Analyze examples of leadership and leaders from history, everyday life, and from literature and informational texts read or read aloud and describe the qualities of a good leader.

1-10. Evaluate the qualities of a good citizen or member of the community, drawing on examples from history, literature, informational texts, news reports, and personal experiences.

Grade 2:

Topic 4: Civics in the context of geography: countries and governments

4-13. Explain the characteristics of a country.

Guiding Questions

1. What do we mean by the term “civil rights”?
2. Who was Martin Luther King Jr.?
3. What is the main message of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech?
4. Are there still inequities in our communities, country, and the world today?
5. What is your dream for your community, country, and the world?

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to share information about Martin Luther King Jr. and explain Civil Rights
2. Students will be able to summarize the important messages of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech
3. Students will demonstrate a connection between Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream and life today in our communities, country, and the world

Activity 1: Who Was Martin Luther King Jr.?

Materials:

John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum Power Point, slides 2,3,4

A Picture Book of Martin Luther King Jr., by David Adler

If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King, by Ellen Levine

I Have a Dream Mobile Template: ["I Have a Dream" Mobiles \[PDF\]](#)

Activity Steps:

1. Brainstorm with students and record what they already know about Martin Luther King, Jr.
2. Read pages 6-14 in *If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King*, by Ellen Levine to provide background knowledge for students
3. Read *A Picture Book of Martin Luther King Jr.*, by David Adler
4. Share Slide 5 in the Museum's power point presentation, showing other people who worked on behalf of Civil Rights. Use the brief biographical information provided with this lesson plan to introduce students to these leaders.

Activity 2: What Was the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom?

Materials:

Power Point presentation slide 3, "The History of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom

Activity Steps:

1. Share background information with students on the March on Washington
The March on Washington's full title was the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It was held on August 28, 1963. Thousands of Americans (the crowd was estimated to be 250,000) from all walks of life attended. Although Dr. King emphasized the struggles of African Americans, he devoted his life to the freedom of all Americans."

2. Use Power Point presentation slide 3, “The History of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 28, 1963”, to help students develop an understanding of the March and its impact on history.

Activity 3: The Power of Dr. King’s Words

Materials:

Power Point presentation slides 3 and 6

Activity Steps:

1. Use Power Point presentation slide 3, “Martin Luther King Jr.’s Speech” to hear the final section of his “I Have A Dream” speech
2. Use Power Point presentation slide 6 or any method you would like to record student responses. Ask them “*which words of phrases stood out to them and why?*” Collect their answers

Activity 4: The Dream Lives On

Materials:

Completed Power Point presentation slide 6 (or your list) of phrases that stood out to the students from Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech
“I Have a Dream” Mobile Templates, developed by the *National Constitution Center*

Activity Steps:

1. Share Power Point presentation slide 6 or your completed list of phrases and review why students selected them

2. Ask students *“are there inequalities still in our society today? Do you think we are all truly free? Why or why not?”*
3. *“If Dr. King was alive today, what types of freedom would he dream about?”* Talk about freedoms in our communities, country, and the world.
4. Work with students to create individual “I Have a Dream” mobiles.