
Holiday Facts & Fun:
Martin Luther King Day
Second Edition



Teacher's Guide

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Produced
by
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MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

SECOND EDITION

From the
Holiday Facts & Fun
Series

Grades K-5

Viewing Time: 11:15

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Intended Audience and Uses

Martin Luther King Day has been produced for students in grades K-5. The program traces the life of the noted civil rights leader from his childhood in Atlanta to his worldwide recognition in Stockholm, Sweden, where he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. This program is intended to give an overview of Dr. King's life and his contributions to the civil rights movement, as well as explain the background of the holiday and how it is typically celebrated. This video meets McREL K-4 History Standard 4 ("Understands how democratic values...have

been exemplified by people...”); McREL U.S. History Standard 29 (“Understands the struggle for racial...equality and for the extension of civil liberties”).

Program Synopsis

The program is divided into two sections. The first shows Dr. King’s childhood and the second shows his role as the principal leader of the U.S. civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. Viewers first see young Martin as he plays with several friends in an Atlanta park. One of King’s most important childhood experiences – his friends’ mother telling him that he can no longer play with her sons – is shown. Other effects of segregation are illustrated as Martin is prohibited from playing on tennis courts, sitting with whites in movies and attending school with white children. Martin, however, was fortunate to have strong parental guidance and support, as well as support from his grandmother. Young Martin, as the program shows, had a special gift for public speaking and excelled in school. He graduated high school two years early. He then attended Morehouse College in Atlanta. Eventually, Martin earned a doctoral degree.

The second part of the program features an animated sequence that explains the events that led to the arrest of Rosa Parks in Montgomery, Alabama. It then shows Dr. King’s leadership role in the Montgomery bus boycott of 1955. Viewers also see how the civil rights leader set into motion changes in school segregation, voter registration, full access to public places and home ownership. Dr. King is shown giving his “I Have A Dream” speech in Washington, D.C. and receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. The final part of the program shows congressional approval of the holiday and how it is typically celebrated – with teachers and librarians reading books about Dr. King’s

life and discussing his ideas. A program at the Martin Luther King National Historic site is also shown.

VIEWER OBJECTIVES

After viewing this video and participating in the suggested activities, viewers should be able to do the following:

1. Briefly recount Martin Luther King's childhood experiences.
2. Explain how segregation affected Dr. King's childhood.
3. Discuss Dr. King's role in the civil rights movement.
4. Tell four areas of civil rights on which Dr. King worked.
5. Explain how Martin Luther King Day is often celebrated.

The producers encourage you to make adaptations and changes to the following lesson plan whenever you feel it will enhance your students' learning experiences. Only by tailoring the material to your unique classroom situation will you be able to maximize the educational experience afforded by these materials.

SUGGESTED LESSON PLAN

Viewing Strategies

Various strategies may be employed when showing ***Martin Luther King Day*** to your class. If you wish to use the video as a way to give general information about the holiday, you may find it useful to show the entire program in one screening, then follow up with appropriate questions (see the ***Suggested Discussion Questions*** blackline master) and/or activities suggested in this guide. Alternately, you may wish to show only the second section of the video if presentation time is limited, or if your class is using the

video to learn more about the U.S. civil rights movement in the mid-20th century.

Introduce the Program

The producers encourage you to prescreen the program to familiarize yourself with its content.

Ask your class if anyone knows what the words “civil rights” mean. Explain that “civil” can mean “citizens” and “rights” can mean things a person can do without fear of being put in jail. Can anyone give an example of “civil rights?” If not, you might mention that everyone in our country has the right to worship as he or she pleases and everyone has the right to say what he or she believes. Are there any instances when those rights cannot be exercised? Explain that a person can say what he or she believes as long as it doesn’t harm anyone else. Now tell the class that our country guarantees many important rights, but there was a time in our history when some citizens were denied those rights. Why are civil rights so important?

Pre-Viewing Activities

Now ask the class if anyone has heard of “segregation.” What does the word mean? Explain that at one time, there were laws that kept African-Americans apart from whites. Continue by saying that many people understood that the laws were unfair, but not enough was done to change them until one man led the fight for fair laws. Mention that he fought in a special way – not like many people fight. Explain that the class will now see a video about this man.

Post-Viewing Activities

Discuss the program, using the *Suggested Discussion Questions* if you prefer. You may want to focus on

Martin’s reaction when he was told he could no longer play with his friends. Ask the class, “How would you feel if you were no longer allowed to play with your best friend simply because you had blue or brown eyes, or blonde or brown hair?” After you have discussed the childhood of Dr. King, ask your class if they think his experiences as a child would be important to him when he grew up.

Now discuss the second part of the program. If it is appropriate for your students’ grade level, discuss the key civil rights issues on which Dr. King worked – voting rights, school desegregation, fair housing laws and equal access to public accommodations (including restaurants). You also may want to mention Dr. King’s work for the poor. Focus on Dr. King’s method of nonviolent resistance. Now pass out *Important Events in Dr. King’s Life*. Do this activity as a class exercise, small group activity, or as homework. When it is completed, go over the answers with your students. As possible culminating activities, have your students draw a mural that shows key events in the civil rights movement of the 1950s through the 1970s; write and put on a play about Rosa Parks and Dr. King’s role in the Montgomery bus boycott; or write about the Martin Luther King National Historic Site in Atlanta. Information can be obtained at <http://www.nps.gov/malu/>.

Description of Blackline Masters

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS – Gives questions that may be asked after each segment is viewed.

IMPORTANT EVENTS IN DR. KING’S LIFE – Reviews some key events in Dr. King’s life.

ANSWER KEY

Video Quiz: 1. Atlanta, Georgia 2. His friends’ mother told Martin he could no longer play with her children. 3. His

grandmother. 4. Any three of the following: the movies, restaurants, parks, tennis courts, schools that had white children, swimming pools. 5. He could make people want to do wonderful things with his speeches. 6. With love 7. Rosa Parks was an African-American who refused to get up from her seat when ordered to do so on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. Dr. King led the fight that allowed African-Americans to sit wherever they wanted on Montgomery buses. His leadership in the fight made him a national figure. 8. To protest the restaurants' refusal to let African-Americans eat there 9. The Nobel Peace Prize 10. His "I Have a Dream" speech

Important Events in Dr. King's Life: (1) His friends' mother tells Martin he can no longer play with her children. (2) Martin's mother explains that some people think they are better than black people. (3) Young Martin practices giving speeches when he is in high school. (4) Rosa Parks is arrested after refusing to give her bus seat to a white person. (5) Dr. King becomes famous and gives speeches following his leadership role in the Montgomery bus boycott. (6) Dr. King receives the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1964.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

Part I: Growing Up in Atlanta

Many years ago, a group of neighborhood children played together practically every day.

They threw baseballs to one another. They raced to see who was the fastest runner. And they played hide and go seek.

One of the children was Martin Luther King, Jr.

One day, something happened to Martin. The mother of two of his friends told Martin that he couldn't play with her children any more.

"Martin," she said, "I don't want you to come to our house ever again. "From now on, you'll just have to stay away."

As you can imagine, that made Martin very upset.

When he got home, his mother could tell that something was wrong. She asked him what had happened, and when Martin told her, she gave him a big hug.

Then she explained that some white people believed that they were better than black people. So they didn't want their sons or daughters to play with black children.

"But," she said, "What those people believe isn't so. Everyone who knows the truth understands that a person's skin color doesn't matter. How people behave is what really matters."

But everywhere Martin went, he saw signs that kept him from going where the white children could go.

He couldn't play in many parks. He wasn't allowed to play on many tennis courts or swim in many swimming pools.

When he went to the movies, he had to sit upstairs, in a balcony. He couldn't sit downstairs with the white people.

And just because their skin color was dark, the King family wasn't allowed to eat in many restaurants.

Martin had to go to a separate school, too. But that didn't keep Martin from being a very good student.

His mother taught him, and his brother and sister, to read when they were very young – even before they started school.

Martin loved to read. He liked to learn about new things. He was always full of questions, and wanted to find their answers.

One big question Martin kept thinking about was how black people and white people could come together and be friends.

Martin liked to talk about things, too – especially with his grandmother. She was his favorite person.

They could talk for hours and hours on the front porch.

Martin also liked to give speeches. When he was in high school,

he practiced giving speeches in front of a mirror. He also learned a lot about giving speeches from his father, who was a minister.

Martin had a special way with words. He could make people feel brave and proud with his speeches. He could make people want to do wonderful things.

When Martin was in high school, he studied very hard. He was such an excellent student that he graduated in only two years. Most people need four years to graduate.

Then he went to college, where he decided to become a minister, like his father.

When he was in college, Martin studied many important ideas. He came to believe that when people are treated unfairly, they should fight back – but not with guns, or fists, or sticks or anything else that might cause harm. The best way to fight back, he thought, was with love.

Part II: Working For Justice

In time, Martin became a doctor of divinity, a person who knows a lot about religions. So he was now doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.

His first job as a minister was at a church in Montgomery, Alabama.

What happened next has been written about in many books.

The story begins with a woman named Rosa Parks, who worked in a department store in Montgomery.

One day Rosa was very tired after work. So she decided to take a bus home. Usually, she walked because she didn't like to ride on the bus.

You see, African-Americans had to sit in the back.

Only white people were allowed to sit in the front. That was the law in Montgomery.

But Rosa, like many others, knew that the law was unfair.

Not only that, if the bus were crowded, a white person could order a black person in the back to get up and give him the seat.

Today, that's hard for us to understand. But that's the way it was back then.

As Rosa sat on the bus that day, it became very crowded.

The bus driver ordered Rosa and some others in the back to stand up and let white people take their places.

But Rosa was much too tired to stand. She decided she would stay seated.

So she was arrested and taken jail. They said she broke a city law. And it was the law, but the law was unfair.

Dr. King heard about Rosa's arrest, and he decided to do something about the unfair law.

"Nobody should ride the buses," he said, "until the unfair law has been changed."

Although Dr. King wanted a new, fair law, he didn't want anyone to get hurt – neither black people nor white people.

He wanted the law changed peacefully. It took a long time, but finally a group of judges said the Montgomery bus law could no longer be used.

Because Dr. King was the most important leader in getting the unfair law changed, he became a hero.

And he became famous. He gave speeches all over the country.

He became the leader of many groups that wanted other unfair laws changed.

He helped change laws so that all adults, regardless of their color, could vote.

He organized and led demonstrations that led to still other new laws that gave all people the right to live wherever they wanted.

He also worked hard to make certain all children – white, black, brown or any other color – received a good education.

And he helped college students, and others, protest when restaurants wouldn't serve African-Americans.

In 1963, he led one of the largest gatherings ever held to get more fair laws passed. Dr. King made one of the most famous speeches ever given during that large gathering. It was called his "I Have a Dream" speech.

The following year, Dr. King was awarded one of the greatest honors any person can be given, the Nobel Peace Prize.

He received the award because he helped remove so many injustices – and because he did it peacefully.

Now he was a hero all over the world.

Nineteen years later, in Washington, D.C., our lawmakers said that the third Monday in January would become a national holiday to honor Dr. King because he worked so hard to get people to love each other and to help one another.

And so every year, in late January, many librarians and teachers read stories about Dr. King's life and discuss his ideas, especially those that help us understand that each person is important, no matter what the color of her or his skin.

And because each person is important, she or he must be respected and treated fairly.

At the Martin Luther King National Historic Site in Atlanta, Georgia, the city of Dr. King's birth, special programs are held on the holiday – as they are in many other places around the country – where student speakers may recite parts of Dr. King's many famous speeches.

Often, the young speakers are contestants in speech contests – events that help everyone remember what a wonderful and powerful speaker Dr. King was.

In short, then, we celebrate Martin Luther King Day because Dr.

King helped us see that friendship, love and understanding are the best ways for people of all races to get along.

Web Resources

Martin Luther King National Historic Site

<http://www.nps.gov/malu/>

A vast array of information on Dr. King and the civil rights movement is available on this site run by the National Park Service.

The Seattle Times Martin Luther King, Jr. Site

<http://c1.zedo.com/ads2/f/28028/3853/172/0/162000115/162000115/0/162/86/zz-V1-pop1064522109500.html>

Interesting facts, a timeline, photo gallery, biography, study guide and much more make this an ideal site to learn more about Dr. King.

Enchanted Learning Martin Luther King Day Site

www.enchantedlearning.com/history/us/MLK/

Information and activities for Martin Luther King Day

Discussion Questions – Martin Luther King Day, 2nd Edition

For Segment One

1. What happened to Martin when he was a child? (Mother of friends told him he could play with her children.)
2. What did his mother tell him? Do you agree with her? (It's not a person's skin color that is important; it's how the person behaves.)
3. What things couldn't Martin and his family do when he was a child? (play in parks, play on tennis courts, sit with whites in movies, go to restaurants)
4. Why were they prevented from doing those things? (because they were African-American)
5. What things did Martin like to do? (read and learn about new things)
6. What question did Martin keep asking himself? (how black people and white could come together, be friends)
7. What was Martin's special gift? (giving speeches)
8. Was Martin a good student in school? How do you know? (yes, because he graduated high school in only 2 years)
9. When he was in college, what did Martin decide he wanted to do for a living? (be a minister like his father)
10. How did Martin think people should fight injustice? (with love)
2. Who was Rosa Parks? What happened to her? (a department store worker who was arrested when she refused to give up her seat on a bus)
3. What did Dr. King say should be done when he heard about what happened to Rosa Parks? (No one should ride the buses until the unfair law was changed.)
4. Who said the Montgomery bus law was unfair? (a group of judges)
5. On what day is Martin Luther King Day held? (3rd Monday in January)
6. Name two ways people often celebrate Martin Luther King Day. (read books about him, give one of his speeches)
7. Where is the Martin Luther King National Historic Site located? (Atlanta, Georgia)
8. Why did Dr. King become famous? (Because he fought injustices with love)
9. What was Dr. King's most famous speech called? ("I Have a Dream")
10. When and where did he give that speech? (Washington, DC, 1963)
11. What award did Dr. King receive in 1964? (Nobel Peace Prize)

For Segment Two

1. Where was Dr. King's first job when he got out of college? (Montgomery, Alabama)

Name _____

Important Events in Dr. King's Life

Directions: Cut out the pictures and paste them in the order that the events took place on another sheet of paper. Underneath each photo, tell what is happening in the picture.

