

*An activity & resource
guide to honor the life and
work of*

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



ACTIVITIES:

All Hands Together

Students find a piece of multicultural construction paper that most matches their skin color then trace their handprints. The handprints can then be arranged symbolically and displayed.

Be A Drum Major for Justice

Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his now famous “Drum Major Instinct Speech” on February 4, 1968 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. In the speech, King explores the human desire for greatness and recognition, and how this drive can lead people to do good things or bad things. Challenge students to find personal meaning in Martin Luther King Jr’s message. The entire speech is 38 minutes long, but the central message can be edited to about 8 minutes.

[The King Center](#) sells audiocassettes of the speech.

- [Suggested condensed version of speech with summary questions and complete text of speech](#)

Civil Rights Memorial

Architect Maya Lin carved 40 important moments of the Civil Rights Movement into a circle of black granite. Why these 40? Explore the answers through different mediums of art, discussion, drama and writing.

<http://www.tolerance.org/blog/teaching-lessons-tolerance-around-civil-rights-memorial>

<http://www.splcenter.org/pdf/static/40lives.pdf>

Displays/Contests

Art, essays, poems, original photography, songs, dramas, interpretive dances, quotes, timelines, stories, posters, collages and murals can all be displayed during the lead up to an assembly observance.

Drama of an Era

Recreate scenes from the video “Eyes on the Prize” that show the great fear of the participants in the Civil Rights Movement coupled with the innate feeling that what they were doing was right. Dramas can also be adapted from history texts and oral history accounts of the era.

Historical Research

Students can find the roots of the Civil Rights Movement by studying the institutionalized system of slavery in the United States prior to the Civil War and the post-war segregated society enforced by Jim Crow Laws.

- [American Slave Narratives: "Been Here So Long."](#) The site, from the New Deal Network, presents a selection of seventeen interviews of former slaves conducted by members of the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Also provided are [Lesson Plans](#) , and an annotated guide to related online resources. Suitable for senior high school students.
- [Amistad Case.](#) The National Archives and Records Administration presents the Amistad Case, a Supreme Court case in 1839 that involved a group of illegally-captured Africans who had seized their captors' ship and killed the captain. The subject has taken on new interest after the release of the major Hollywood movie, "Amistad." The site includes hand-written documents ([and a document review template](#)) from the case and [Teaching Activities](#) designed to correlate to national standards for history, civics and government.
- [The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow.](#) Brought to you by PBS, the site presents teachers with historical resources and teaching ideas on the segregation of African-Americans from the 1860's through the 1950's. The site includes historical narratives, videos, pictures, a Century of Segregation time line, a geography section, and teacher resources with lesson plans and activities.

Living the Dream Pledge

Prior to an assembly, design a display and post pledges from students and staff. The King Federal Holiday Commission pledge reads as follows:

In honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and work, I pledge to do everything that I can to make America and the world a place where equality and justice, freedom, and peace will grow and flourish. I (your name) commit myself to living the dream by: Loving; not hating, Showing understanding; not anger, Making peace; not war.

MLK Day of Service

During the 1950s and '60s, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized the power of service to strengthen communities and achieve common goals. Initiated by Congress in 1994, King Day of Service builds on that that legacy by transforming the federal holiday honoring Dr. King into a national day of community service. The aim is to make the holiday a day ON, where people of all ages and backgrounds come together to improve lives, bridge social barriers, and move our nation closer to the "Beloved Community" that Dr. King envisioned.

<http://www.mlkday.org/>.

Nobel Prizes/Peace Grams

Dr. King earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Send "Nobel Prizes" to people modeling justice, equality or fairness. A higher risk activity could be the idea of sending "Peace Grams" to seek resolutions, make amends or build bridges.

Songs of the Civil Rights Movement

Singing songs together bolstered the spirits of the Civil Rights workers during tumultuous times. A group sing-along can give students a glimpse of the history and drama of the Civil Rights Movement. Songs: “*We shall Overcome*,” “*This Little Light of Mine*,” “*Keep Your Eyes on the Prize*,” “*Lift Every Voice and Sing*,” “*Go Tell It on the Mountain*,” “*Follow the Drinking Gourd*,” “*Amazing Grace*,” “*Free at Last*,” “*Zion’s Children*.”

[Reference article on songs of the Civil Rights Movement from Silver Burdett:](#)

Tiny Words, Big Messages

Place a concept, a quote, or artwork on buttons, stickers, T-shirts, posters, balloons, signs, book markers, etc., prior to an assembly to develop a theme or to convey a message. If time allows, have contests for the designs and artwork. The T-shirts can be made for those involved in the assembly.

What the World Wants Project from the World Game Institute

Over the past forty years, a growing body of literature has documented, in ever more depressing and debilitating detail, the myriad and complex problems facing humanity. Over the past ten years, a small, but increasingly systematic effort has been made to explore and document an equally important aspect of our global problems. This effort is directed at learning what the world *should* look like, not at finding out what the world will be like. Specifically, the more than 200,000 people who have participated in this project (from government leaders and corporate executives to university, high school and even elementary school students) have been asked, "Given the present situation of the world, what do you want the world to be like twenty years from now? They were, in other words, asked to be visionaries like Martin Luther King Jr. [The results of these efforts have yielded something quite extraordinary.](#)

Web Activities

The *Holidays on the Net* site offers web-based activities for the King Holiday. <http://www.holidays.net/>

RESOURCES:

Dr. King's 1964 Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech

This is a good resource for a study on non-violence, civil rights, or government. The speech contains concepts relevant to today's world. From the Nobel Prize web site.

<http://nobelprize.org/peace/laureates/1964/king-lecture.html>

The King Center

Established in 1968 by Coretta Scott King, The King Center is the official, living memorial dedicated to the advancement of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of America's greatest nonviolent movement for justice, equality and peace.

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

LIFE Magazine image gallery

LIFE magazine has an extensive photo archive documenting Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement.

http://www.timelifeimages.com/MS_TIMEPIX/source/home/home.aspx



Louisiana State University Library, Baton Rouge, LA.

This site includes a lot of text. Within the text is a large number of links to other useful sites. The beginning is dedicated to Martin Luther King, Jr. The rest of the text is about Black History Month. Great for research papers and choosing topics related to Black History

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/hum/mlk/>

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project at Stanford University

Stanford University has developed an extensive official collection of Dr. King's writings, sermons, letters, and other documents. The site contains downloadable text and audio clips of King's most famous speeches, information on King's life as well as a Liberation Curriculum. The Liberation Curriculum initiative provides teachers with educational materials that engage students in active learning and critical inquiry. This is an excellent resource for primary source material on King's life.

<http://mlk-kpp01.stanford.edu/>

"The Martin Luther King You Don't See on TV"

by Jeff Cohen and Norman Solomon in the January 1995 issue of Media Beat

This article speaks of King's mostly unnoted shift from civil rights issues to human rights issues during the last three years of his life. The article cites King's [Beyond Vietnam Speech](#) where he condemned the United States as the "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today... on the wrong side of a world revolution" as evidence that some of King's final messages are still being generally ignored by the media.

<http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2269>

Race Relations

The Website *About.com* lists a series of articles and essays on race relations.

<http://racereactions.about.com/>

***The Seattle Times*: Tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr.**

This is a great site from our local *Seattle Times* that features documents, timelines, photos, lesson plans, comments from student readers, school project ideas, links, and an interactive quiz.

<http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/mlk/>

Southern Poverty Law Center

This web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center is designed for teachers, students and parents. It spirals around three themes: *Tolerance Watch*, *Do Something*, and *Dig Deeper*. Visitors find a variety of resources: links to current event articles, interactive surveys to explore your hidden biases, information bulletins regarding methods to deconstruct biased language, and a variety of practical “how to” guides—*10 ways to Fight Hate*, *101 Tools for Tolerance*, *Respond to Hate at School*, *Mix It Up at Lunch*.

<http://www.tolerance.org/>

***TeachersFirst.com* Remembering Martin Luther King, Jr.**

A page from *TeachersFirst.com*, a web resource for K-12 classroom teachers who want useful resources and lesson plans. *TeachersFirst.com* is a division of Network for Instructional TV, Inc., a not-for-profit learning technologies corporation.

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/mlk.htm>

“Time 100: Leaders & Revolutionaries: Martin Luther King, Jr.” from **Time magazine**

Three-page profile of King, with accompanying timeline and a sidebar entitled “What if King had lived?”

<http://www.time.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/king2.html>