

Martin Luther King Day

By Sarah Gudgeon

I. Read

Martin Luther King Day is on the third Monday of January. Martin Luther King was the leader of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s. In America, at that time black and white people could not use the same public services, they could not go into the same bars and restaurants, they could not even sit on the same bench in a park.



Black people were first brought to America as slaves and although slavery was finally abolished in 1865 black people were still persecuted. Martin Luther King fought for black people to have the same civil rights as white people. He used non-violent protest to fight for freedom and equality for everyone. He was sent to prison 29 times but he never stopped his campaign.

His famous speech *'I have a dream... that one day down in Alabama... little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers'* and his work against segregation earned him a Nobel peace prize in 1964. He was 35 years old and the youngest person to ever receive the prize. Tragically, Martin Luther King Jr was assassinated on 4th April 1968 but his legacy lives on.

2. Answer the questions.

- a. Who was Martin Luther King Jr?
- b. Could black and white people do the same things in America in the 1950s and 1960s?
- c. What did Martin Luther King Jr want?
- d. How did Martin Luther King Jr protest against inequality?
- e. What happened in 1964?
- f. How did Martin Luther King Jr die?

3. What's your dream? Complete the sentence.

My dream is for people to...

4. Make a class poster. Write your dream on the poster.

Teacher's Notes

2. Answer the questions.

- a. The leader of the American Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.
- b. No they couldn't. They couldn't use the same public services or bars and restaurants for example.
- c. He wanted black people to have the same civil rights as white people.
- d. He used non-violent protest.
- e. He received the Nobel Peace Prize.
- f. He was assassinated on 4th April 1968.

3. What's your dream? Complete the sentence.

Talk to the class about what their dreams are for the future of our world. Talk to them about what's happening in the world now; war and suffering and famine. Ask them what kind of world they would like to live in. Be careful to keep the focus on humanitarian issues and away from politics or religion. Get each student to complete their sentence.

4. Make a class poster. Write your dream on the poster.

Prepare a huge piece of cardboard, stick various pieces together if necessary. Put a picture of Martin Luther King Jr in the middle of it and then invite the children to write their dream on the poster. If you have a very big class, prepare 4 posters and divide the students into groups. Display the posters in the classroom.

Follow on discussion: what can you as young people do to make these dreams come true and make the world a better place?