



Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s

**Legacy of
Racial and Social Justice:**

A CURRICULUM FOR EMPOWERMENT

(Elementary through Middle Grades)

This curriculum guide was made possible through the partnership and funding of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Georgia State University, under the auspices of the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence.

Spring 2003

**DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.'S LEGACY
OF RACIAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE:
A CURRICULUM FOR EMPOWERMENT**

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Teachers,

The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and Preservation District was established October 10, 1980 to “protect and interpret for the benefit, inspiration, and education of present and future generations the places where Martin Luther King, Jr. was born, where he lived, worked and worshipped, and where he is buried.”

The staff at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site is very fortunate to work with Georgia State University and the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence on the development of **“Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Legacy of Racial and Social Justice: A Curriculum for Empowerment.”** We all are committed to providing quality educational materials to continue Dr. King’s legacy and philosophy of nonviolent social change to educators and students.

We hope that the materials in the curriculum kit bring the rich history of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site into your classroom and encourage many more adventures in learning about Dr. King and the movement he helped create.

Sincerely,

Frank Catroppa
Superintendent

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This curriculum would not have been possible without the educators who contributed their time, talent, knowledge and expertise to this project, under the auspices of Georgia State University and the Alonzo A. Crim Center for Urban Educational Excellence. The staff of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site wishes to express our sincere appreciation to everyone for your outstanding work. We hope these partnerships will continue to grow as we all continue to educate our young people on the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

FOREWORD

It is befitting that the actual words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. relate the foreword to ***Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Legacy of Racial and Social Justice: A Curriculum for Empowerment:***

Man is man because he is free to operate within the framework of his destiny. He is free to deliberate, to make decisions, and to choose between alternatives. He is distinguished from animals by his freedom to do evil or to do good and to walk the high road of beauty or tread the low road of ugly degeneracy.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *The Measures of Man*, 1959.

Many of the ugly pages of American history have been obscured and forgotten....America owes a debt of justice which it has only begun to pay. If it loses the will to finish or slackens in its determination, history will recall its crimes and the country that would be great will lack the most indispensable element of greatness--justice.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* 1967.

Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. Man must evolve for all human conflict a method, which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Nobel Prize acceptance speech*, Stockholm, Sweden, December 11, 1964.

Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice. Justice at its best is love correcting everything that stands against love.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* 1967.

The curriculum that you and your students are about to experience attempts to emulate the spirit of the words Dr. King uttered. The actualization of them is left up to you, the teacher, and the children you inspire.

INTRODUCTION

Other than parents and caregivers, what individuals are often the most influential in setting and recharging the moral and judgmental schemata of young minds in our society?

Teachers are! What an awesome responsibility, when you really think about it. Teachers help set the preliminary agenda for their students' understanding of right and wrong behavior, for what emotions should and should not be acted upon, for which behaviors will cause them great pain and negative consequences, and for what ideas are worthy to be pursued to make a positive contribution to their lives and to the lives of others.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is one of the most notable role models of character, personal sacrifice, and intelligence that anyone can point to in recent history. As teachers, we should use his example to help us do our job to the fullest extent possible. Our children must learn of Dr. King's life and about the history and challenges that surrounded him, for, unfortunately, many of the same challenges still exist today. There is still bigotry, political and social injustice, and distortions of historical fact that plague the citizens of America and citizenry around the world. Even now, years after Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1964, which gave African Americans the right to vote in America, in the year 2007, Congress will once again cast votes to decide whether African Americans retain the right to vote. Can you imagine that this Act has not become a law? Of course, no one would believe that African Americans will lose their right to vote, but what if...?

This world is too unpredictable to guess about the outcome of anyone's or any group's future. In a democracy, it is the duty of each citizen to become an active part in his/her government. But the government is only part of the answer, for the average citizen must take action to do what he/she can to alleviate injustice wherever he/she may find it. Dr. King

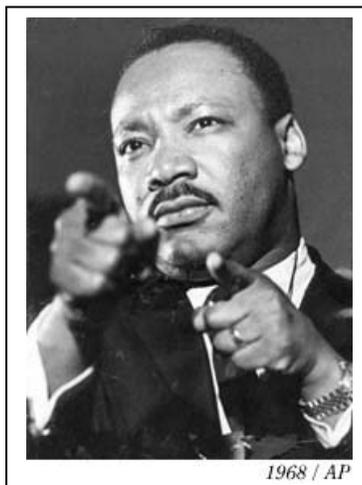
said, ***“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”*** In the world, right now, there is child slavery, extreme poverty, suffering, homelessness, physical and mental abuse, health issues, pollution and erosion of the environment, ethnic cleansing, terrorism, and war. Our children will inherit a world that many feel is out of control. As technology brings the world closer and closer, we have an obligation to help our children handle such a world. We can begin by planting the seeds of moral and civic integrity in kindergarten.

The content of this curriculum guide is a start towards making our children more sensitive to their world. They can become informed activists to change their immediate surroundings – their schools, neighborhoods, and communities. Who knows how far positive social activism can go? Dr. King certainly had no idea when he was playing on the sidewalks of Auburn Avenue that he would someday win the esteemed Nobel Peace Prize. Teachers never know what child in their classroom may become the next Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. or the next Mother Teresa.

Let us give our children opportunities to develop their fullest intellectual, moral, and civic potential. Let’s empower them towards peace in our world.

***Let’s empower them with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s
Legacy of Racial and Social Justice:
A Curriculum for Empowerment.***

We can do no less!



Curricular Goals and Objectives: The Guiding Principles

Goal 1: *Students will discover issues of race and social justice both past and present.*

Objective 1.1

Students will identify the causes, consequences and effects of the Civil Rights Movement.

Objective 1.2

Students will determine the impact of the Civil Rights Movement on the lives of African American's in the past and today.

Objective 1.3

Students will discover the strategies and philosophies that affected positive change during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950's and '60's.

Objective 1.4

Students will research and investigate racial and social justice issues of the 20th and 21st century.

Objective 1.5

Students will propose solutions to problems of racial and social justice in present day America.

Goal 2: *Students will determine how The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and what it stands for can empower children and further the causes of racial and social justice in America and throughout the world.*

Objective 2.1

Students will identify and research the major events in the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. from his birth to his death.

Objective 2.2

Students will identify the role that Atlanta and some of its citizens contributed to the Civil Rights Movement and to leadership in America.

Objective 2.3

Students will analyze Dr. King's character, leadership, speeches/writings, and beliefs and their effects on history, the Civil Rights Movement, and the world.

Objective 2.4

Students will synthesize and apply what they learn from the Historic Site towards their lives, their community, and events in present day America.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Its Purpose

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Legacy of Racial and Social Justice: A Curriculum for Empowerment is a teacher’s resource guide that provides activities for students in kindergarten through eighth grade to explore the rich history of the civil rights movement and the persona of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Through creative, interdisciplinary lesson plans and interactive resources, the curriculum focuses on building on students’ current civil rights knowledge and helping them to compare present-day realities to past struggles for justice in America and throughout the world. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic Site, the Auburn Avenue area, and surrounding neighborhoods provide a picturesque and reminiscent backdrop for the guide’s goals. In fact, the guide’s greater purpose lies in its goals:

- (1) To have students discover issues of race and social justice in the past and present, and
- (2) To have students determine how The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site and what it stands for can empower them and further the causes of racial and social justice in America and throughout the world.

The guide includes reproducible, “teacher friendly” materials in social studies, civics, history, writing, reading/language arts, and literature. Through the scaffolding of relevant historical and sociological information within appropriate grade level contexts, students focus on creative problem-solving and experiential learning. They are encouraged through this curriculum to determine their own personal agendas for improving race relations and for becoming advocates for social justice in their communities, their country and their world.

Graphic organizers are a part of each lesson and assist students in developing a depth of understanding and awareness of social issues. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is presented as a role model of character and leadership in the struggle for racial and social justice. As well, the unsung heroes of the struggle are spotlighted to attest to the bravery of the common man. Children of courage are profiled who brought humility and compassion to the civil rights movement, demonstrating, without question, the best of our humanity. This curriculum goes beyond the range of teacher/student interactions and learning. It goes to the heart of the human spirit to reveal to our children the heritage and legacy of greatness to which each of us is called.

Its Format

The Guide is divided into 5 major sections:

- ◆ **Section 1** – Guidelines for Teachers
- ◆ **Section 2** – Lesson Plans and Units by grade levels K (kindergarten) and 1, grades 2 and 3, grades 4 and 5, and grades 6 through 8
- ◆ **Section 3** – The Visitor Center Exhibits
- ◆ **Section 4** – A Problem-Solution Project
- ◆ **Section 5** – References

Guidelines for Teachers

It is important for teachers using a new resource for the first time to get some tips on the best use of the materials and to be forewarned about any possible procedural and/or judgmental pitfalls. Since this guide deals with issues on race and social justice, this section points out the potential sensitive nature of such issues for children and their parents. Teachers should find the contents both informative and helpful in dealing with his/her various constituencies.

Overview of Lessons

A list of the lessons and units by grade level provides the titles and the topic of each lesson. Teachers may use this section to assist them as they plan the content of lessons and units they wish to teach.

Lesson Plans and Units

The lesson plans in this guide are interdisciplinary and address the **Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) objectives** outlined for the state of Georgia. Each lesson plan includes **critical questions** for students and teachers to examine as the lesson is taught. **Background** building is an important introductory component for each lesson. A motivating experience is written to excite students about the lesson and to provide a **hook** for the content to be learned. There are step-by-step **procedures** for delivering the lesson content and **center and extension ideas** for reinforcement in small groups. **Synthesis** ideas are a part of each lesson to help students internalize and build on the concepts learned. Students get opportunities to transfer their learning in new and different ways **before their visit** to the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site, **during their visit** and **after their visit**. A listing of **materials, resources, and references**, including online resources accompany each lesson. **Graphic organizers** are used to help students more thoroughly investigate and retain ideas. **Attachments** are meant for teacher use and **handouts** are to be used by students. Lessons that are closely related often constitute a **unit** wherein several lessons are written to support each other. This structure allows students to better bridge their understanding of more complex concepts. All of these components complete a package of experiential learning.

The Visitor Center Exhibits

At the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, **Courage to Lead** is a wonderful exhibit for the students to explore. It

presents the topics/titles: Segregation, the King Family, Call to Lead, Timeline, Visiting the Mountain, Expanding the Dream, Overcoming Loss, Freedom Road, and the Photo Gallery. For each topic/title, a list of questions is presented in a visual or graphic organizer format. The answers to the questions appear at the end of this section. Students will have fun using materials that are found in this section of the guide.

A Problem-Solution Project

Inspiring students to become critical thinkers and advocates for racial and social justice is the most intriguing challenge of this guide. A model of a Problem-Solution Project appears in the guide as an example of the type of activities that can be done with students to stimulate them to become young activists. From simple letter writing tasks to nonviolent demonstrations, caring adults (e.g., parents and teachers) can guide students towards making a difference in their neighborhoods, communities, city, state, country and the world. The challenges of solving simple to complex issues in our society are before us. Our children are our most valuable resource.

References

The materials listed in the final section of the guide will assist teachers in finding additional resources to support the curriculum and their own personal investigations and learning.

HOW CHILDREN DEVELOP “RACIAL” AND CULTURAL IDENTITY AND ATTITUDES

Researchers have discovered important information about how young children develop “racial” and cultural identity and attitudes. Some of the key points are listed below. This information can be used as a framework for observing children and for selecting and creating appropriate lessons and activities.

Two-Year-Olds become increasingly aware of the physical aspects of identity. The awareness of gender is usually noticed first, followed by a curiosity about skin color, hair color and texture, eye shape and color as well as other physical characteristics. Awareness of disabilities tends to come later than the awareness of gender and “race;” however, some two-year-olds may begin noticing more obvious physical disabilities, such as a person using a wheelchair.

Children between the ages of two and three may begin to be aware of the cultural aspects of gender, noticing that girls play more frequently with dolls while boys play more often with trucks. Children at this age may also be aware of ethnic identity, noticing such things as children eating different cultural foods, celebrating different holidays or not celebrating or recognizing holidays or birthdays that they view as important.

Children may show signs of pre-prejudice (the ideas and feelings in very young children that may later develop into “real” prejudices when reinforced by biases that exist in society). Pre-prejudice is often manifested by discomfort, fear or rejection of differences.

Children at this age may take their first steps toward the appreciation of people who are physically and culturally different from themselves if positive interactive experiences are part of the regular home, school and after-school program environments and activities.

Three- and Four-Year-Olds begin to expand their observations of differences and seek greater explanation of those differences. They are aware of their own and others' physical characteristics. Constructing their identity is a primary task. They want to know how they got their skin, hair and eye color and may question why "racial" group "color" names are different from the actual colors.

Preschoolers are curious about variations within their extended family and the reason why two people with different skin colors may be considered part of the same group. They begin to wonder if skin, hair and eye color will remain constant, as they begin to recognize that getting older brings physical changes. Children at this age may ask questions like, "Will my skin color change when I grow up?" or "Will you always be white?"

Five-Year-Olds begin to build a group ethnic identity, as well as an individual identity. They can more fully explore the range of differences within and between "racial" and ethnic groups as well as the range of similarities between groups.

Children at this age begin to understand scientific explanations for differences in skin color, hair texture and eye shape. They are also beginning to understand the concept of family traditions and family history.

Six to Eight-Year-Olds continue to recognize other group members and begin to realize that their ethnicity is not changeable. They are beginning to become aware of history, local actions and attitudes for and against cultural groups. Such new knowledge, influenced in part by the media, may foster personal prejudices that may become an integral part of a child's attitudes and behaviors.

Children this age are highly influenced by the way they see people interact and resolve conflicts. Many children in this age group learn about culture and "race" with greater cognitive depth and emotional connection than they did at earlier stages. They may begin to take pride in their own cultural identities and understand the experiences of others.

Nine- to Twelve-Year-Olds are gaining a greater understanding of the geographic and historical aspects of culture. Although many 9-12-year-olds may still be concrete thinkers primarily focused on their own experiences, many may be moving into more abstract thinking. They may become aware of the attitudes and behaviors of persons in positions of authority within institutional settings, such as schools, places of worship and youth agencies. They may also begin to gain an awareness and understanding of the various perspectives that have surrounded historical events.

Children at this age may understand personal and family struggles against bias and are often willing to discuss culture, “race” and differences. A more complex understanding of personal, family and community identity based on cultural values may emerge. Children at this age are becoming increasingly aware of the valuing and de-valuing of culture and “race” by their peers, the media and the larger community. The advantages and disadvantages of some groups politically, educationally and economically are becoming evident and children may informally begin to discuss what they see as unfairness.

Most 9-12 year-olds can understand “racial” and cultural stereotypes; can speak from dominant and non-dominant perspectives; can practice stating the strengths and positive aspects of various cultures; and can discuss how internalizing a negative view about self may affect someone’s confidence.

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CAUTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Cautions and clarifications appear below to support the teacher who wants his/her students to take action to affect change in the circumstances that they determine racially and/or socially unjust in our society and in societies around the world.

CAUTIONS:

- ***Teachers should consider the developmental levels of the students in the classroom. Their emotional development is most important to consider when addressing issues of race, gender, social status, societal problems and historical inaccuracies.***
Always attempt to answer students' questions, but always, as well, try to give more than one side of the issue. Allow students to draw their own conclusions based on accurate information and an abundance of resources to consult.
- ***Stay away from issues and concerns about which you have little information.*** Make certain that before you begin any lesson that you anticipate possible misconceptions, family and cultural biases, and the trepidations of your school administration. Helping students become social activists is a scary undertaking for many adults. These situations can often be less volatile, if parents are consulted through a parent meeting and/or letter and with discussion with grade level leaders and the school principal.
- ***Develop a written plan, which may incorporate portions of this curriculum, or may go beyond what is included.*** Share your plan with other teachers and the administration. Permission letters are a must. Keep everybody informed at all times.

- ***If field trips are a part of your plan, make certain that you plan for all costs, attire, time schedules, transportation, chaperones, and meals.*** Always include lessons that prepare students for why they are going on the field trip; what you expect to be done and learned while on the field trip; and then debrief what was actually done and learned once the field trip has been completed.
- ***Preview all videotapes and audiotapes that will be shared with students before using them.*** Your preview will allow you to determine the appropriateness of the content for your grade level and for your particular students. Do not use materials that would be offensive to your students or their families. The preview will also allow you to develop listening and viewing questions and research additional information. This type of preparation will serve both you and your students well in understanding and using the content of the resources.
- ***Spend as much time as needed to help students understand the power of nonviolence and other positive change strategies.*** It is imperative that they always be respectful and stretch to see the point of view of others as they explore controversial issues. Further, help students see that empowerment never calls forth “haughty power plays or rebellious rebel rousing.” It is equally important to help students understand the negative views they may encounter from others and both positive and negative consequences of their behavior or actions. Knowledge of conflict resolution strategies and their implementation in the classroom should probably accompany your use of some components of this curriculum. Be strategic in your planning to make certain that every student has a “mind-and-heart-changing experience” trying to make the world better for themselves and others.

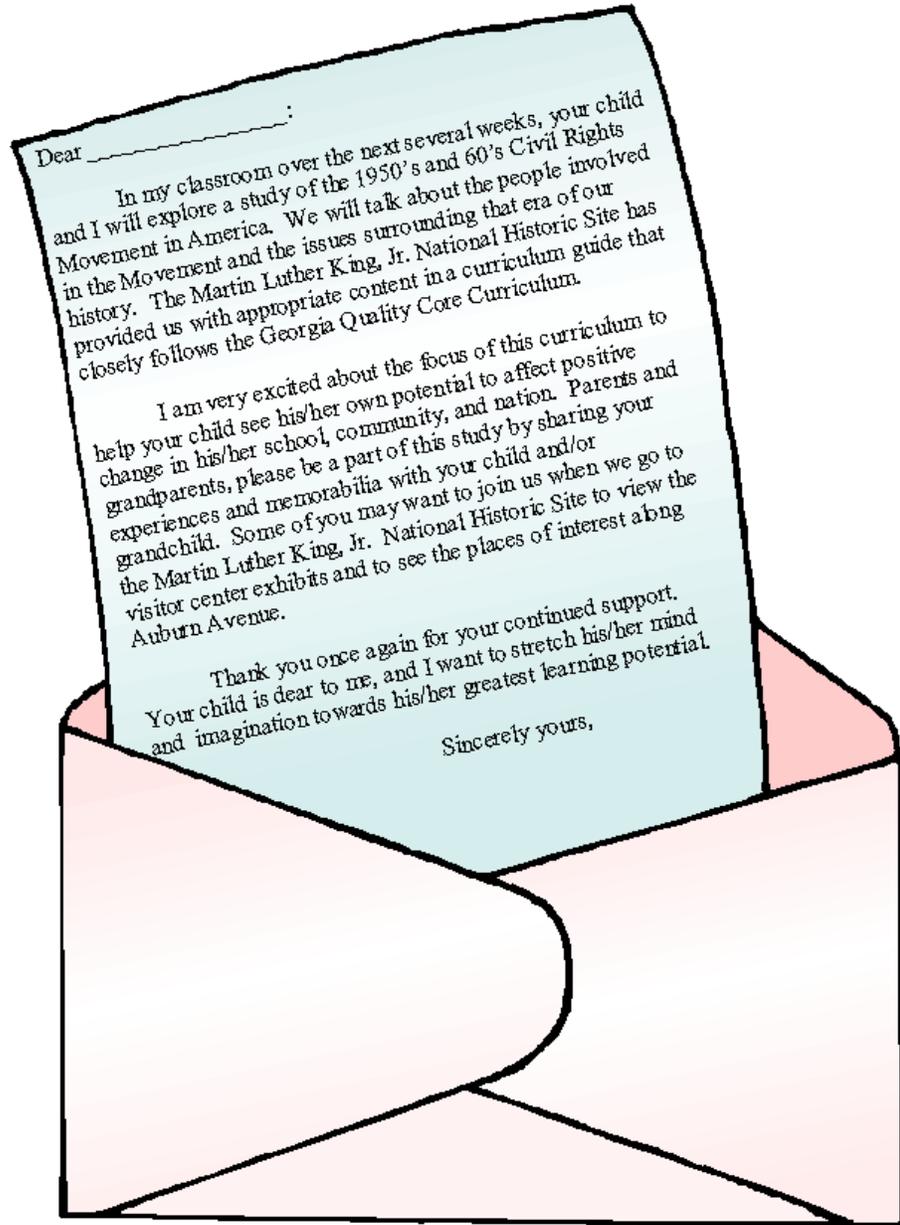
CLARIFICATIONS:

- ***The lessons/units in this curriculum guide will take from 2 to 6 weeks to implement.*** It is expected that teachers will spend as much time as needed to read the suggested materials, often including online resources, and become thoroughly knowledgeable about the topics they wish to implement with students.
- ***Because the lessons are written within a range of grade levels (i.e., K and 1, 2 and 3, 4 and 5, and 6 through 8), teachers must decide which of the units will work best for the specific grade that they teach.*** Remember that the maturity of your students at any grade level is more significant than their chronological age.
- ***Before completing each lesson/unit, revisit the Critical Questions.*** Debrief with students the answers to the critical questions for each lesson/unit. The responses to these questions can provide an informal assessment of the content.
- ***Use the parent letter that appears in this section of the guide as an example of the type of letter that may be sent to parents.*** The most effective letter will be an original one that has your voice and appeals to the commitment of parents.
- ***Section 3 of the guide best prepares students for a visit to the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site.*** The materials in this section match the exhibits that students will experience at the Historic Site. Answers to the questions posed for the exhibits appear at the end of the section.

- ***Do not use student artifacts that appear in the guide as models for your students.*** The artifacts are meant to demonstrate a level of expectation for students' work at a specific grade level. Each student's work should be original and reflect his/her thinking, planning and execution.

- ***Once you use the guide, please complete the Piloting Questionnaire (Appendix B).*** The National Park Service and the curriculum developers would like your input to continue to revise and improve the publication to better suit your needs.

A SAMPLE PARENT LETTER



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

AT THE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site is committed to providing educational opportunities for your students that enhance and influence learning, understanding, and sharing. As well, we provide meaningful experiences on the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

If you are unable to bring your students to the Historic Site, National Park Service Rangers are available to come to you at no cost to your school.

The Historic Site also provides on-site programs for your students:

Puppets Shows:	Grades PreK - 5 Tuesdays & Thursdays By Reservation Only	10:00 AM
Storytelling:	All Ages Wednesdays No Reservations Required	10:00 AM
Life in the 1930s:	Grades 3 - 6 Wednesdays By Reservation Only	9:30 AM

Please make your reservations at least 30 days in advance. For more information about on-site or off-site programs, please contact the Historic Site at (404) 331-6922 ext. 3606.

OVERVIEW OF LESSONS/UNITS

GRADES K - 3

Dr. King's Life and the Words Associated with Him

Students create a timeline of their lives and the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Students also investigate the definitions of important words often associated with the Civil Rights Movement. These words include *citizen, civil rights, freedom, peace, love* among others.

Names, Names, Names

Students identify other important people that were involved in the Civil Rights Movement; such as: Andrew Young, Ralph David Abernathy, and Hosea Williams.

Dr. King's Leadership and Character

Students analyze the character and leadership qualities of Dr. King and compare those qualities to another young civil rights personality- Ruby Bridges.

GRADES 4 AND 5

Picturing Nonviolence or Nonexistence

Students investigate the principles of nonviolence and reflect upon the relevance of nonviolent strategies for peace in today's society.

People of Peace

Students plan and conduct oral history interviews of Atlantans that participated in the Civil Rights Movement and create visuals to accompany their interviews.

If It Is To Be, It Is Up To Me

Students discover the power of the written word and the process of social action.

GRADES 6 THROUGH 8

The March On Washington

Students explore the lives of some of the ordinary people who participated and helped foster the Civil Rights Movement.

Portraying the Dream

Students investigate the visual arts that surround the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech

and looking at other visuals of the era through the lens of a visual artist.

Peace Studies: Where In The World Is Peace?

Students investigate Peace movements throughout time and make a peace timeline.

A Time to Break the Silence

Students build upon their studies of peace by examining issues raised by Dr. King's "Beyond Vietnam" speech.

The Civil Rights Movement: The Next Generation

Students examine the generation of the Civil Rights Movement of the '50s and '60s as compared and contrasted to the Hip-Hop generation and their issues of civil rights and social justice.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND ME (UNIT)

Image Is Everything

Students trace the development of the image of Black people in the media.

Images of Self: Analysis of a Poet

Students analyze the role of images in our society, using a picture of themselves and Dr. King as a boy.

Controlling Images: Stereotypes in Our Society

Students investigate an image of Jim Crow and how stereotypes function in our society.

The Legal Status of Blacks in Georgia When I Was Born: Contrasting Dr. King's Birth- Year and Mine

Students research the history of blacks in Georgia based on their birth-year and make comparisons to Dr. King's birth-year.

A Field Trip

Students use the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site exhibits as resource information on which to do additional online research (i.e., web quest).

Class Presentations

Students culminate their web quest on all segments of the unit with original Power Point presentations.

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TIMELINE

Significant Years in Dr. King's Life

Directions: Choose any 2 years listed below

- 1948 1954 1955 1957 1958 1959
 1960 1963 1964 1965 1968
-

**Significant Event
In Dr. King's Life:**

YEAR _____	YEAR _____

Bonus Question:

Dr. King became a leader of the Civil Rights Movement in 1955. How many years was he a leader of the movement before his death.

_____ years

PILOTING QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher:	Date:
Title of Lesson Piloted:	
Topic:	
Number of Students:	
School System:	
School:	Grade Level:

1. How much did students know about the topic/ critical questions before the lesson was taught?
2. Did the lesson appear appropriate for the grade level?
3. What component(s) of the lesson went extremely well?
4. Which component(s) of the lesson went extremely poorly?
5. Did the students enjoy the lesson? Were they engaged?

6. What component(s) of the lesson should be revised, deleted, or further developed?

7. Do you think this lesson will support your students' understanding and appreciation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site?

8. Which resources listed in the curriculum were most useful to you?

9. What other portions of the curriculum did you find most useful?

10. Do you think this curriculum will support your students' understanding and appreciation of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site?

OTHER COMMENTS: