

# MLK Jr. Day of Service

## Service-Learning Lesson Plan

### **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. King, both a Baptist minister and civil-rights activist, had a seismic impact on race relations in the United States, beginning in the mid-1950s. Among his many efforts, Dr. King headed the SCLC. Through his activism, he played a pivotal role in ending the legal segregation of African-American citizens in the South and other areas of the nation, as well as the creation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. King received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, among several other honors. King was assassinated in April 1968, and continues to be remembered as one of the most lauded African-American leaders in history, often referenced by his 1963 speech, "I Have a Dream."

On Monday, January 20, 1986, the first national celebration took place in honor of Dr. King. Schools, libraries, government offices, community organizations, and businesses across the country paused to recognize one man's struggle of bridging a gap that divided humanity.

Dr. King once said, "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." In spirit of this ethic, the United States Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act in 1994.

### **MLK Day and Service Learning:**

Many MLK Day of Service events and projects encourage service learning. Service learning is a method of teaching that combines classroom instruction with meaningful community service. This form of learning emphasizes critical thinking and personal reflection while encouraging a heightened sense of community, civic engagement, and personal responsibility.

Service learning offers students immediate opportunities to apply classroom learning to support or enhance the work of local agencies that often exist to effect positive change in the community.

### **What You Can Do for Others:**

Dr. King once stated that, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

Serving can be as simple as creating cards for children in a hospital or as complex as running a community-wide clothing drive or fundraiser.

[Check out this Third through Fifth Grade lesson plan to see how words and actions can inspire, teach and change the world.](#)

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## Additional Resources

### MLK Speeches: YouTube

1. ["Street Sweeper"](#)
2. ["The Drum Major Instinct"](#)
3. ["I Have a Dream"](#)

### Tributes to MLK: YouTube

1. [MLK Memorial Dedication Speech by President Barack Obama](#)
2. [Robert Kennedy Pronouncement](#)

### MLK Films, Biographies, and Related Content: YouTube

1. ["Our Friend, Martin"](#)
2. ["Citizen King"](#)
3. ["BrainPOP Martin Luther King, Jr."](#)
4. ["Martin Luther King's Letter from Birmingham Jail"](#)

### Upcoming Films:

1. ["Selma"- In theatres January 9, 2015](#)

### MLK Speeches and Writings:

1. ["Letter from Birmingham Jail"](#)
2. ["I Have a Dream Speech"](#)
3. (See ["Books on MLK for More"](#) below for more)

### Children's Books on MLK:

1. [\*A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.\*](#)
2. [\*My First Biography: Martin Luther King, Jr.\*](#)
3. [\*A Kid's Guide to African American History\*](#)
4. [\*Dear Dr. King: Letters from Today's Children to Martin Luther King, Jr.\*](#)
5. [\*The Civil Rights Movement for Kids\*](#)
6. [\*They Had a Dream\*](#)

### Books on MLK:

1. [\*A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.\*](#)
2. [\*The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.\*](#)
3. [\*Strength to Love\*](#)
4. [\*Where do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?\*](#)
5. [\*Death of a King: The Real Story of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Final Year\*](#)

### Books on Service Learning:

1. [\*Reach Out and Give\*](#)
2. [\*Accept and Value Each Person\*](#)
3. [\*The Kids Guide to Service Projects\*](#)
4. [\*Doing Good Together\*](#)
5. [\*The Giving Book\*](#)

6. [\*A Kids Guide to Giving\*](#)
7. [\*Kids with Courage\*](#)
8. [\*Talk and Work it Out\*](#)
9. [\*Service Learning and Social Justice: Engaging Students in Social Change\*](#)
10. [\*Social Problems: A Service Learning Approach\*](#)

**Additional Links:**

1. ["MLK Day of Service PSA"](#)
2. [MLK Day of Service: Service Learning Curriculum: A Guidebook for Schools, Organizations, & Parents \(PDF\)](#)
3. [MLK Day Toolkit \(PDF\)](#)
4. [MLK Day Webpage](#)