



Faith in Action

"Building Bridges"

*"Let's build bridges,
not walls"*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lesson: Inclusion, equal opportunity, justice, reconciliation, and agape love – these tenets form the foundation upon which Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s global vision was grounded. It is little wonder that Dr. King called this peaceable world "The Beloved Community." Here, homelessness, poverty, and hunger are made extinct by the equitable distribution of world resources, conflict subdued by, what the King Center calls, a "mutual commitment to nonviolence." The motivation? "Human decency," the kind of respect for human life, that is, that won't tolerate hate and oppression because it can't...much like the Kingdom of God. Too utopian of a vision to ever come true? Dr. King thought not. We, on the other hand, won't ever know unless we give it a try.

This week, put faith in action by...

Building the Beloved Community

This week, take a little downtime to familiarize yourself with Dr. King's global vision, the Beloved Community. The following link is a helpful place to start

<https://scottsspeak.wordpress.com/2015/01/21/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-and-the-beloved-community/>

Once you've acquainted yourself with King's philosophy and contention for success, such as mass commitment to nonviolence and decency, talk to your child this wonderful world built on fairness, love and mutual respect, then help your child build their own Beloved Community using some of their toys, such as stuffed animals, dolls, Legos, etc.

As they build their community, use age-appropriate language to ask them what values will govern their vision of a beloved community and to show you who is included and who isn't. Follow-up all of your questions with a why (or why not).

When finished, conclude by comparing and contrasting their beloved community and Dr. King's with the real world. Then talk about ways they might be able to work towards making the latter a lot more like the formers.

A World Vision

In a "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," Dr. King wrote that "*Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.*" Unless we can see the bigger picture, it can be easy to erroneously think that everywhere doesn't go far beyond our immediate space. We need only rewind to *in the beginning* (Genesis 1:1) to see the truth in King's words. When God declares creation to be good, it is not a moral judgment but rather a declaration on the interconnectivity of creation. God's creation, in other words, was made for a purpose and that purpose is harmonious dependence on each other.

This week, help your child expand their horizons with this worldly craft:

<https://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2014/01/mlk-day-activity-for-kids.html>

As your child "recreates," help them make a list of some of the ways each piece of the world and all their contents are dependent on each other to help illustrate King's words. Use the creation story in Genesis as a guide to help ensure you've included all of the pieces to God's puzzle. When talking to your child about the world's interdependence, don't forget to bring unfairness (or injustice into the conversation. How is an injustice anywhere really an injustice everywhere? Take some time with your child and find out!

Egging-On Anti-Racism

Get your family's day off to a great start by serving up a side order of anti-racism next to the bacon and eggs! Putting this activity on the menu is an egg-cellent way to start: <https://www.pre-kpages.com/celebrating-martin-luther-king-jr-day/>

Aside from its nutrient value, the benefit of this activity lays in its ability to help teach children that colorblindness isn't the right approach when attempting to build bridges between people of different colors. So, be sure to take time with your child to recognize *and* discuss the color differences between the brown and white eggs before jumping into their commonality by cracking them open.

In that discussion, explain that God made eggs different colors just like people and that color in both eggs and people doesn't mean one is better than the other; an egg is an egg and a person is a person. Enforce this message by plating the eggs together after they are scrambled or fried to see if your child can now tell the difference.

Look for opportunities throughout the day, week, month and years to help your child recognize and honor the same color difference in people just like eggs!

Want a worksheet to help keep the learning cooking??? Just follow this link:
<https://onesharpbunch.com/2015/01/mlk-jr-freebie.html>

"I Have a Dream" Card

Dr. King's dream of equality and fairness for all people regardless of the color of their skin can only be achieved when we are willing to lift each other up by reaching across the barriers that separate us. Use this card to help your child both visualize and express what that hope of unity can look like in the world today.

<https://parentingchaos.com/martin-luther-king-jr-crafts-dream-card/>

Show your child that you are committed to making the world a better place for everyone by crafting your own "I Have a Dream" card alongside of them. As you craft, talk about what racial unfairness was like when you were their age. How is it the same as issues facing your child's generation? How is it different? Where do you see progress and hope? What areas need more work and compassion? And don't forget to of course share your dreams and theirs for a better tomorrow.

When you're finished, help your child use their healing hands to send this link to a friend or two so that they can start to dream big like Dr. King and both of you too!

Tearing Down Walls One PRAYER at a Time

Fear, intolerance, ignorance, bias, greed, apathy, and superiority are just some of the damaging self-motivations that help to maintain, fortify, and build even higher walls that separate people from people. Before you know it, hatred and violence start setting-in making even he thought of scaling those walls feel impossible. Why would anyone want to live in a world full of walls, separation and unfairness?

Starting this week, encourage your child to begin to deconstruct some of the walls that separate us through prayer. Building an "It's Unfair Prayer" wall together can help children articulate the inequalities in the world that they find particularly troublesome. Use red construction paper to make a brick for each unfairness in the world they and your family think needs to be imploded by prayer. Once your child has finished their bricks, build a wall by putting them together. Each night before bed, have your child remove a brick to include in their nightly prayer. The next thing they'll know, they've torn down another wall!

Share Your Care by Being Fair!

So maybe these little songs and poetic rhymes weren't exactly composed by Mozart or Emily Dickinson; but they are a really fun and useful way to help your child remember a lot of the things that make Dr. King so memorable and great. Just think about that song that you can't get out of your head and you'll know how much our brains appreciate music and catchy phrases when it comes to memory!

<https://livingmontessorinow.com/free-martin-luther-king-day-songs-and-rhymes-for-circle-time/>

Form a duo with your child and then encourage you both to learn a song or a rhyme or two a day to keep the unfairness away!