

Topic: WHY Martin Luther King, Jr.: What did he do? Why does it matter?

INSTRUCTIONS

Overview: Far too often our students do not see the connection between the history of our country and their present context and reality. While we tell them that they need to care, we may not always figure out the best way to help them see themselves and their own self-interest in the struggles of the past. It is our job as educators to challenge them to move past their current understanding, to bring the tools of critical thought and analysis to their interpretation of the past, and to build a context for their understanding of both the present and future.

Goal: Provide students with the opportunity to explore the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. through the Civil Rights Movement, looking specifically at the strategies he employed and their relevance to the lives and experiences of students today.

Number of people: unlimited

Student materials: paper, pen/pencil, and copies of activities

Teacher materials: instructions and copy of each activity

Time: Each session has been designed to last between 45 and 60 minutes. Sessions can be consolidated. If you are having an important discussion, feel free to postpone or even eliminate one or more of the activities. Together we are working to stimulate student thought, challenge their and our own ideas, and together to move toward an understanding of social change in our current context. Feel free to respond to the needs of your specific class.

Directions:

Session ONE: Montgomery Bus Boycott *(This session includes an overall introduction as well as a first topic. If you are working with shorter class periods, you can do the introduction and initial survey during one session and save the Montgomery Bus Boycott topic for an entirely separate session.)*

1. Review the overarching goal of the WHY project.
2. Break students into either pairs or small groups depending on which grouping you think will be most effective with your particular group of students.
3. Ask students to complete the Initial Survey with their partner or partners. Make sure that one person in each group acts as the recorder and one as the reporter. (5-7 minutes)
4. Ask students to share their responses from the survey. Push students to be specific. (10 minutes)
5. Collect surveys to be returned to Service Learning Office.

6. Explain to students that each session will be focusing on a different period of MLK's life and work. Each session will include both reading and activities.
7. Today's session will be devoted to the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
The goals of today's session are:
 - a) To explore the strategy of boycotting as a means of protest.
 - b) To look at the struggles, successes and significance of the Montgomery Bus Boycott.
8. Read aloud the 2-page article entitled "Montgomery Bus Boycott." (10 minutes)
9. Upon completion of the reading, pass out Montgomery Bus Boycott, Worksheet One. Give students a few minutes to jot down responses and then review the worksheet using the corresponding overhead. (15-20 minutes)
10. Pass out Montgomery Bus Boycott, Worksheet Two. Read the following quote from the end of the article:

"Right here in Montgomery, when the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say, 'There lived a race of people, a black people, fleecy locks and black complexion. A people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights. And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilization.'"

11. Have students write a short essay (minimum of two paragraphs) talking about the quote and answering at least one of the following questions:
 - a) What does it mean to have the moral courage to stand up for your rights?
 - b) In what ways have African Americans demonstrated collective moral courage within your lifetime?
 - c) How do U.S. history books generally characterize the African American experience?
 - d) How have you demonstrated moral courage in your lifetime?
12. If time permits, allow students to read from their responses.

MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT

"You know, my friends, there comes a time when people get tired of being trampled over by the iron feet of oppression. There comes a time, my friends, when people get tired of being plunged across the abyss of humiliation, where they experience the bleakness of nagging despair. There comes a time when people get tired of being pushed out of the glittering sunlight of life's July, and left standing amid the piercing chill of an alpine November."

Dr. Martin L. King
Montgomery, Alabama

Sparked by Rosa Parks on December 1st, 1955, the Montgomery bus boycott was an 11-month mass protest that ended with the U.S. Supreme Court ruling that public bus segregation is unconstitutional. The Montgomery Improvement Association coordinated the boycott, and its president, Dr. Martin L. King, became a prominent leader as international attention focused on Montgomery, Alabama. The bus boycott demonstrated the potential for non-violent protest to successfully challenge segregation, and served as an example for other southern campaigns that followed.

The roots of the bus boycott in Montgomery began years before Rosa Parks' arrest. The Women's Political Council (WPC), a group of black professionals founded in 1946, had turned their attention to segregation practices on the Montgomery city buses in 1953. In a meeting with the Montgomery mayor in March 1954, the Council's members outlined their demands. When little resulted from this meeting, the WPC sent a letter to the Montgomery mayor asking him to "Please consider this plan, and if possible, act favorably upon it, for even now plans are being made to ride less, or not at all, on our buses."

On December 1st, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to move after a bus driver demanded that she give her seat to a white man, resulting in her arrest. The WPC responded by calling for a 1-day protest of the city's buses on December 5th. The Montgomery chapter of the NAACP spoke with Parks telling her that hers was the case that would launch a massive boycott. She agreed and on December 5th, 90% of Montgomery's black citizens stayed off the buses.

Following the initial success, black leaders arranged a meeting with the city's ministers to discuss the possibility of extending the boycott to a long-term campaign. During this meeting, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA) was formed and Martin Luther King, Jr., a young minister new to Montgomery, was named president. Parks recalls, "The advantage of having Dr. King as president was that he was so new to Montgomery and to civil rights work that he hadn't been there long enough to make any strong friends or enemies."

The year before, Dr. King came to Montgomery to pastor at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. Dr. King's non-violent philosophy was influenced by Mohandas K. Gandhi, an Indian born activist and philosopher. Dismissing the use of violence as "both impractical and immoral," Dr. King endorsed the method of non-violent protest, stating that this "mentally and spiritually aggressive" technique not only avoids "external physical violence," but "seeks to avoid internal violence [to the] spirit."

The MIA voted to continue the boycott and issued a formal list of demands: courteous treatment by the bus operator; first-come, first-serve seating for all, with blacks seating from the rear and whites from the front; and black bus operators on predominately black routes. At

the first meeting of the MIA, Dr. King said to the black community, "I want to say that in all of our actions we must stick together. Unity is the great need of the hour, and if we are united we can get many of the things that we not only desire but which we justly deserve."

As blacks remained off of the buses through 1956, city officials and white citizens responded with the hope of defeating the boycott. Black taxi drivers were penalized if they charged less than forty-five cents, as they had begun charging ten cents (the regular bus fare) in support of the boycott. Both Dr. King's and Ralph D. Abernathy's homes were bombed and the membership of the local White Citizen's Council doubled. City officials obtained injunctions against the boycott in February, 1956 and arrested 156 protesters under a 1921 law prohibiting the hindrance of a bus. King was tried and convicted on the charge and ordered to pay \$1000 or serve 386 days in jail. Despite this resistance, as Dr. King later described, "We came to see that, in the long run, it is more honorable to walk in dignity than ride in humiliation. So, in a quite dignified manner, we decided to substitute tired feet for tired souls, and walk the streets of Montgomery."

Under increasing pressure to address the conflict in Montgomery, the federal district court ruled bus segregation unconstitutional on June 4th, 1956. The Supreme Court upheld the lower court's ruling, and on December 21st, 1956, the boycott officially ended. King's central role in the bus boycott garnered international attention and the MIA's tactics of combining mass nonviolent protest became the model for challenging segregation in the South.

"As we stand and sit here this evening and as we prepare ourselves for what lies ahead, let us go out with a grim and bold determination that we are going to stick together. We are going to work together. Right here in Montgomery, when the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say, 'There lived a race of people, a black people, fleecy locks and black complexion, a people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights. And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilization.'"

**Dr. Martin L. King
Montgomery, Alabama**

Montgomery Bus Boycott

Worksheet 2

1. Read the following quote from the end of the Montgomery Bus Boycott article:

“Right here in Montgomery, when the history books are written in the future, somebody will have to say, ‘There lived a race of people, a black people, fleecy locks and black complexion. A people who had the moral courage to stand up for their rights. And thereby they injected a new meaning into the veins of history and of civilization.’”

2. Write a short essay (minimum of two paragraphs) talking about the quote and answering at least one of the following questions:

- ✓ What does it mean to have the moral courage to stand up for your rights?
- ✓ In what ways have African Americans demonstrated collective moral courage within your lifetime?
- ✓ How do U.S. history books generally characterize the African American experience?
- ✓ How have you demonstrated moral courage in your lifetime?

Topic: WHY Martin Luther King, Jr.: What did he do? Why does it matter?

INSTRUCTIONS

Overview: Far too often our students do not see the connection between the history of our country and their present context and reality. While we tell them that they need to care, we may not always figure out the best way to help them see themselves and their own self-interest in the struggles of the past. It is our job as educators to challenge them to move past their current understanding, to bring the tools of critical thought and analysis to their interpretation of the past, and to build a context for their understanding of both the present and future.

Goal: Provide students with the opportunity to explore the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. through the Civil Rights Movement, looking specifically at the strategies he employed and their relevance to the lives and experiences of students today.

Number of people: unlimited

Student materials: paper, pen/pencil, and copies of activities

Teacher materials: instructions and copy of each activity

Time: Each session has been designed to last between 45 and 60 minutes. Sessions can be consolidated. If you are having an important discussion, feel free to postpone or even eliminate one or more of the activities. Together we are working to stimulate student thought, challenge their and our own ideas, and together to move toward an understanding of social change in our current context. Feel free to respond to the needs of your specific class.

Directions:

Session TWO: The Albany Project

1. Have students read the Albany Movement reading. (10 minutes)
2. Take a few moments to review the selection with students using the following discussion questions: (10-12 minutes)
 - a) What are the main differences between the Albany Movement and the Montgomery Bus Boycott?
 - b) What was the Albany Movement hoping to achieve?
 - c) Why were there tensions between Martin Luther King, Jr. and the local civil rights organizations?
3. Pass out the Albany Movement Worksheet One.
4. Have students complete Worksheet One. (5 –7 minutes)

5. Review Worksheet One with students, particularly focusing on the issues students identified in their own community. (5-7 minutes)
6. Break students into small groups based on the similarity of issues they identified in their community. Make sure that each group identifies a reporter and a recorder. Ask them to name and describe the basic tenets of the movement they might create around their issue using the Albany Movement Worksheet Two.
7. Have each group report back to the full class.

THE ALBANY MOVEMENT

“The Negroes of Albany suffered in quiet silence. The throbbing pain of segregation could be felt but not seen. It scarred Negroes in every experience of their lives. They lived in segregation; they ate in segregation; they learned in segregation; they prayed, and rode and worked and died in segregation, and in silence. A corroding loss of self-respect rusted their moral fiber. Their discontent was turned inward on themselves. But an end came with the beginning of protest.”

Dr. Martin L. King

Formed in November 1961, the Albany Movement was a broad campaign challenging all forms of segregation and discrimination in Albany, Georgia. The coalition included Colored Ministerial Alliance, NAACP, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and other black organizations. Dr. Martin L King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) joined the movement in December 1961, attracting national publicity to Albany and arousing resentment among some members of the local civil rights leadership.

In July 1961, Charlie Ware, a black field hand, was shot three times in the neck by a local sheriff. Despite an FBI account affirming Ware's version of the attack, he was jailed for assaulting the sheriff. Efforts to free Ware began the formation of the Albany Movement.

The Albany Movement aimed to end all forms of racial segregation in the city, focusing primarily on bus and train stations, libraries, parks, hospitals, buses, jury representation, public and private employment and police brutality. Through the course of the campaign, the Movement incorporated all of the methods of non-violent direct action through mass demonstrations, jail-ins, sit-ins, political action, boycotts, and legal actions. It was the first campaign in the South to employ all of the methods of non-violence simultaneously.

However, Albany police chief Laurie Pritchett, aware that violence would bring negative publicity, responded to the demonstrations with massive, but nonviolent arrests. By December 1961, over 500 protestors were jailed, and negotiations with city officials stalled. Local civil rights leaders called on Martin Luther King, Jr. to come to Albany to help reinvigorate the Movement; and in December 1961, Dr. King and Ralph D. Abernathy joined over 100 black citizens in jail on charges of parading without a permit, disturbing the peace and obstructing the sidewalk.

Dr. King's involvement attracted media attention and inspired more members of the black community to join the protests. This did not go unnoticed by city officials, and soon after King's arrest, city officials and Albany Movement leaders came to an agreement: if Dr. King left Albany, the city would desegregate the buses, postpone trials, return bond money and set up a biracial committee.

Yet, after King left Albany, the city failed to uphold the agreement and protests and the arrests continued. Six months later, in July 1962, Dr. King and Abernathy were ordered to stand trial for their involvement in previous demonstrations. They were all found guilty and ordered to pay a small fine or serve 4 days in jail. They chose to serve the time. As King explained from jail, “We chose to serve our time because we feel so deeply about the plight of more than 700 others who have yet to be tried...We have experienced the racist tactics of attempting to bankrupt the movement in the South through excessive bail and extended court fights. The time has

now come when we must practice civil disobedience in a true sense or delay our freedom thrust for long years.”

With Dr. King in jail, demonstrations and arrests increased. A few days later, Chief Pritchett notified King and Abernathy that an unknown person had paid their bail and they were released. Protests continued in Albany through July 1962, when the Albany Movement invited SCLC and SNCC to share leadership in the campaign. Dr. King recruited a staff experienced in non-violent action, voter registration and legal struggles. SNCC representatives questioned SCLC's approach of bringing outside leadership in to take control of a movement they believed the local community should direct. This was just one example of the tensions that arose between SNCC and SCLC during the Movement.

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) was established in 1957 with the goal of redeeming "the soul of America" through nonviolent resistance. Its main objective was to coordinate nonviolent protests throughout the South. The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was started 1960 at a historically black college in North Carolina. The initial idea was the SNCC would serve as the youth-wing of SCLC, appealing to a younger generation of civil rights activists. The students, however, remained fiercely independent of King and the SCLC, generating their own projects and tactics. Their ideological differences eventually caused SNCC and SCLC to be at odds.

In August 1962, Dr. King agreed to leave Albany and halt the demonstrations, effectively ending the Albany Movement. While close to 95% of the black population boycotted buses and shops, the ultimate goals of the Movement were not met. Although the Albany Movement was successful in registering thousands of black voters, it secured few concrete victories for integration.

King blamed much of the failure on its wide scope, stating in a 1965 interview, “the mistake I made there was to protest against segregation rather than against a single and distinct facet of it. Our protest was so vague that we got nothing, and the people were left very depressed and in despair...what we learned from our mistakes in Albany helped our later campaigns in other cities to be more effective.” King's experiences in Albany helped inform the strategy for the Birmingham Campaign that followed less than a year later.

“When we planned our strategy for Birmingham months later, we spent many hours assessing Albany and trying to learn from its errors. Our appraisals not only helped to make our subsequent tactics more effective, but revealed that Albany was far from an unqualified failure. Thousands of Negroes were added to the voting registration rolls. By reason of the expanded Negro vote, the moderate defeated the segregationist in the city of Albany, which in turn contributed to his victory in the state. As a result, Georgia elected its first governor pledged to respect and enforce the law equally.”

Dr. Martin L. King

Albany Movement

Worksheet One

1. Give 3 examples of what the Albany Movement wanted to achieve:
2. Define non-violent direct action:
3. What do you think is most effective about the strategy of non-violent direct action?
4. What do you think is least effective about the strategy of non-violent direct action?
5. List 2 struggles in your community (either in your school community or neighborhood):

6. Would non-violent direct action be helpful to address the struggles in your community? Why or why not?

7. In reflection, Martin Luther King, Jr. felt that the Albany Movement had taken on too many issues. Do you agree? Do you think it is better to take on one issue at a time or several issues? Why or why not?

Albany Movement

Worksheet Two

Decide as a group what issue or struggle you will be focusing on for the purpose of this exercise, and answer the following questions:

1. Describe the issue or struggle facing your community in a way that someone from outside the community can clearly understand.

2. What would it look like in your community if this struggle or issue were removed? Describe this in positive terms so people can easily see what kind of a community you are hoping to achieve.

Begin to develop your Movement by answering the following questions:

1. Is there a particular person who has the power to make change around this issue? Are there many people? List all of the people who need to be convinced to change around this issue in order for you to have success.

2. Who else cares about your issue or struggle? Who will join you in your movement?

3. How would you reach out to them?

4. What strategies would you employ to create change? Would you use non-violent direct action like a boycott? Would you use a protest? Be specific.

Umoja Student Development Corporation

Teacher's Copy

Topic: WHY Martin Luther King, Jr.: What did he do? Why does it matter?

INSTRUCTIONS

Overview: Far too often our students do not see the connection between the history of our country and their present context and reality. While we tell them that they need to care, we may not always figure out the best way to help them see themselves and their own self-interest in the struggles of the past. It is our job as educators to challenge them to move past their current understanding, to bring the tools of critical thought and analysis to their interpretation of the past, and to build a context for their understanding of both the present and future.

Goal: Provide students with the opportunity to explore the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. through the Civil Rights Movement, looking specifically at the strategies he employed and their relevance to the lives and experiences of students today.

Number of people: unlimited

Student materials: paper, pen/pencil, and copies of activities

Teacher materials: instructions and copy of each activity

Time: Each session has been designed to last between 45 and 60 minutes. Sessions can be consolidated. If you are having an important discussion, feel free to postpone or even eliminate one or more of the activities. Together we are working to stimulate student thought, challenge their and our own ideas, and together to move toward an understanding of social change in our current context. Feel free to respond to the needs of your specific class.

Directions:

Session Three: The Birmingham Campaign

1. Have students read the Birmingham Campaign Selection. (10 minutes)
2. Review the selection with students using the following discussion questions: (15 minutes)
 - a) What was the overarching goal of the Birmingham Campaign? Did it succeed?
 - b) What strategies were employed?
 - c) Why and how were high school students involved?
 - d) How did the fact that protesters and their interactions with police were captured on TV help the Birmingham Campaign?
3. Post signs on four sections of the classroom that read: Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree.

4. Read each of the statements listed at the end of the directions. Explain to students that all of the statements are based on opinion not fact. Students should listen to the statement and then, based on their own opinion, move to the sign that represents their viewpoint for that particular statement.
5. In their small groups by each sign, students should select a spokesperson and discuss the issue, making sure that the spokesperson is clear about each group member's perspective.
6. Each spokesperson should present the views of their group to the class. If time allows, each group should have the opportunity to respond after hearing the other groups' responses.

Statements: *(Remember: read each statement, and based on whether students agree or disagree, and how strongly, they should group themselves by the posted signs in the classroom.)*

- a) High school students should not have been included in the protests and put in danger of physical harm.
- b) Sit-ins, marches, and other forms of non-violent protest would never work now the way they did in the 1960's.
- c) If people are violent with you, you have to be violent with them.
- d) There is less segregation now than there was in the 1960's.
- e) There is no cause worth giving up your life or putting your family in danger.
- f) Problems facing African Americans in the 1960's are the same problems facing African Americans in the year 2004.

THE BIRMINGHAM CAMPAIGN

“There are those who write history. There are those who make history. There are those who experience history. I don't know how many historians we have in Birmingham tonight. I don't know how many of you would be able to write a history book, but you are certainly making history and you are experiencing history, And you will make it possible for the historians of the future to write a marvelous chapter. Never in the history of this nation have so many people been arrested for the cause of freedom and human dignity.”

Dr. Martin L. King

The campaign in Birmingham, the largest industrial city in the South, generated national publicity and federal action due to the particularly violent response of segregationists. According to Dr. Martin L. King non-violent direct action could not have been staged in a more appropriate place, in the “belly of the beast.”

In May 1962, Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) joined Birmingham civil rights leaders in a massive direct action campaign to attack segregation in Birmingham. They believed that Birmingham would be the toughest fight of the civil rights movement to date, and, if successful, it would have implications for segregation all over the nation. “Our goal in Birmingham was larger than ending segregation in one Southern city,” one civil rights leader stated. “It was our hope that our efforts in Birmingham would dramatize the fight and determination of African-Americans in the Southern states and ... would force [President] Kennedy to draft and push through Congress a Civil Rights Act, outlawing segregation and racial discrimination in public accommodations, employment and education.”

The strategy was to put economic pressure on Birmingham's merchants, so organizers scheduled the protests to begin around the Easter season, the second biggest shopping period of the year. The campaign began with a series of mass meetings and direct actions. King spoke on the philosophy of non-violence and its methods. Actions began with lunch counter sit-ins, marches on City Hall, and a boycott of downtown merchants.

The city government obtained a court injunction directing an end to all protests. King and SCLC decided to disobey the court order. King declared, “ We cannot in all good conscience obey such an injunction which is an unjust, undemocratic and unconstitutional misuse of the legal process.” Their plans to submit to arrests were threatened, however, by insufficient funds to cover bail expenses. SCLC had used up all of their money on demonstrators already arrested and jailed. More demonstrators were scheduled to go in with Ralph Abernathy and King, and SCLC could not guarantee their eventual release.

King contemplated whether he should go to jail given the lack of funds, because his services as a fundraiser were so desperately needed. But he worried that his failure to submit to arrests would undermine the credibility of the movement. King concluded that he had to go to jail. “Friends,” King said, “I've made my decision. I don't know what will happen or what the outcome will be. I don't know where the money will come from.” Dr. King was arrested and was kept in solitary confinement. It was at this time that King penned his famous “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”

In order to maintain pressure and draw national attention, SCLC organizers decided to include high school students in the next wave of demonstrations. They viewed high school students as

an untapped source of freedom fighters who did not have the jobs and responsibilities of older activists. Nearly 900 students were arrested, and another 2,500 demonstrated the following day.

Eugene "Bull" Connor, Birmingham's Commissioner of Public Safety, ordered firemen to use their hoses on the protesters. As the youth fled from the fire hoses, Connor directed officers and their dogs to pursue them. "We were witnessing police violence and brutality Birmingham-style: unfortunately for Bull Connor, so was the rest of the world," one civil rights worker stated. As the clashes between nonviolent protesters and police made headlines across the country, the movement reached a new level of visibility. Birmingham's white businesses also began to feel pressure from the adverse publicity and from the lack of revenue.

President John F. Kennedy sent representatives to begin negotiations between the SCLC and Birmingham's business community. Eventually, an agreement between the business community and SCLC leadership was announced, which contained a commitment to desegregate public accommodations, a committee to ensure nondiscriminatory hiring practices, cooperation in releasing jailed protesters, and public communications between black and white leaders to prevent further demonstrations.

Announcement of the agreement was met with violent retaliation. The home of Rev. A. D. King, (King's brother) was bombed, and a bomb was planted near the Gaston Motel where King and SCLC leaders were staying. President Kennedy responded by ordering 3,000 federal troops to Birmingham. However, on September 15, 1963, Ku Klux Klan members bombed the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham and four young African-American girls were killed.

The momentum generated by the Birmingham campaign culminated on August 28 1963, as the "March on Washington" attracted more than 200,000 demonstrators. It was here that Dr. King delivered his famous "I Have A Dream" speech. After the march, King and other civil rights leaders met with President Kennedy at the White House. The Birmingham Campaign and the March on Washington eventually paved the way for the passage of the most significant civil rights legislation of the 1960s: the Civil Rights Acts (1964) and the Voting Rights Act (1965).

"There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their selfhood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating 'For Whites Only.' We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. We are not satisfied and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream."

Dr. Martin L. King
March on Washington Speech

Topic: WHY Martin Luther King, Jr.: What did he do? Why does it matter?

INSTRUCTIONS

Overview: Far too often our students do not see the connection between the history of our country and their present context and reality. While we tell them that they need to care, we may not always figure out the best way to help them see themselves and their own self-interest in the struggles of the past. It is our job as educators to challenge them to move past their current understanding, to bring the tools of critical thought and analysis to their interpretation of the past, and to build a context for their understanding of both the present and future.

Goal: Provide students with the opportunity to explore the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. through the Civil Rights Movement, looking specifically at the strategies he employed and their relevance to the lives and experiences of students today.

Number of people: unlimited

Student materials: paper, pen/pencil, and copies of activities

Teacher materials: instructions and copy of each activity

Time: Each session has been designed to last between 45 and 60 minutes. Sessions can be consolidated. If you are having an important discussion, feel free to postpone or even eliminate one or more of the activities. Together we are working to stimulate student thought, challenge their and our own ideas, and together to move toward an understanding of social change in our current context. Feel free to respond to the needs of your specific class.

Directions:

Session Four: The Chicago Campaign

1. Have students read the Chicago Campaign. (10 minutes)
2. Take a few moments to review the selection with students using the following discussion questions: (15 minutes)
 - a) What strategies did MLK employ in Chicago?
 - b) Which were the most and least effective?
 - c) What do you think were the main differences between Northern racism and Southern racism?
 - d) Do you think it was good that Martin Luther King, Jr. focused on the North or would it have been better if he had stayed focused on the South?
 - e) Can laws end racism?
 - f) What role do legal changes play in limiting racism?
3. Pass out The Chicago Campaign Worksheet One. At the beginning of the final quote in the Chicago Campaign reading selection, MLK says:

“Another basic challenge is to discover how to organize our strength into economic and political power...”

Discuss this quote. Work with the group to define economic and political power.

4. Break students into pairs and, using Worksheet One, have them come up with a list representing some of the different ways that economic and political power are expressed regularly in our country. What would it look like to have political and/or economic power?
5. Have students come back and report to the group.
6. Conclude with a discussion. (20 to 25 minutes)

Suggested areas for additional discussion:

What would it mean to have a political candidate who represented your interests?

How would you find or create such a candidate?

THE CHICAGO CAMPAIGN

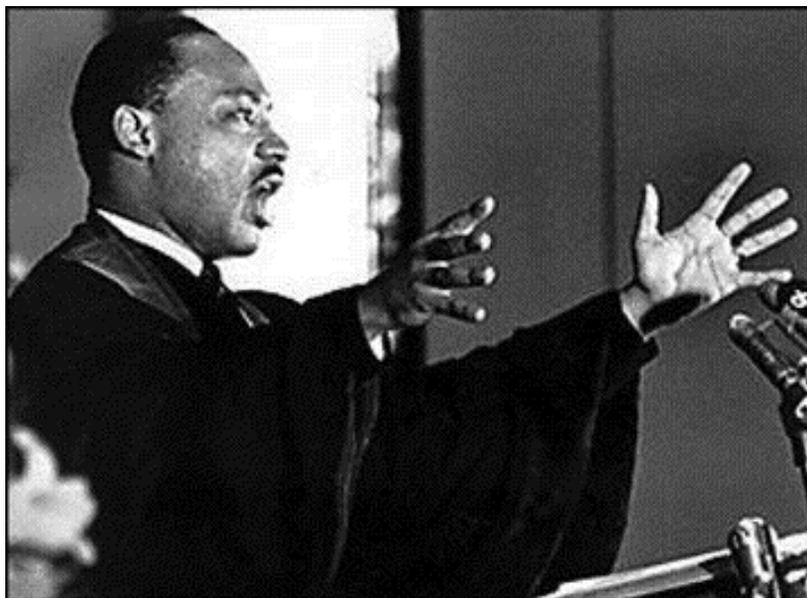
"Perhaps the area of greatest concentration of my efforts has been in the cities of Chicago...Chicago has been a wonderful proving ground for our work in the North. There have been no earth-shaking victories, but neither has there been failure. Our open housing marches, which finally brought about an agreement which actually calls the power structure of Chicago to capitulate to the civil rights movement, these marches and the agreement have finally begun to pay off."

**Dr. Martin L. King
August 1967**

By 1965, Dr. Martin L. King had come to believe that civil rights leaders should pay more attention to the economic problems of African-Americans, in addition to segregation and voting rights issues. Throughout the nation, impatience was growing with the progress of civil rights movement. In the urban areas of large northern cities, King's philosophy of nonviolence was increasingly questioned.

In an effort to meet the challenge of urban areas, Dr. King brought his civil rights crusade to Chicago, his first big effort outside the south. Leaders of the campaign tried to organize urban black residents who suffered from unemployment, bad housing, and poor schools. In addition, these leaders protested against housing practices that kept blacks from living in many neighborhoods and suburbs around Chicago. King believed such housing practices played a major role in trapping poor blacks in urban ghettos. In January 1966, Dr. King and his wife moved into an apartment in the North Lawndale community at 1550 S. Hamlin Avenue.

In July 1966, Dr. King addressed a crowd of more than 50,000 at Chicago's Soldier Field in an attempt to end housing slums in Chicago. At the end of King's speech, he led his followers on a march from Soldier Field to City Hall where he posted demands on Mayor Richard J. Daley's door, calling for various measures to strengthen the enforcement of existing laws and



regulations with respect to housing. In August 1966, he led a march through Chicago's southwest side to demonstrate the need for equal access to decent housing for African

Americans. White residents responded by pelting Dr. King and the marchers with rocks and bottles.

After a spring and summer of rallies, marches, and demonstrations, an open housing agreement was signed between the Mayor Daley, the city of Chicago, Chicago Real Estate representatives, the Chicago Housing Authority, and a coalition of blacks, liberals, and labor organizations. Additionally, in December 1966, Dr. King announced that the Federal Housing Administration would fund a program to restore housing in Chicago's lower-income areas. Chicago officials promised to encourage fair housing practices in the city if King would stop the protests. King accepted the offer and the Chicago campaign ended.

However, some people thought this agreement had little effect. There was an impression that Dr. King's Chicago campaign was hurt partly because of Chicago's powerful mayor, Richard J. Daley, and partly because of the unexpected and complex issues of northern racism. Some critics argued that because of Chicago's economically and ideologically diverse black population, Dr. King was unable to mobilize Chicago's black community as he did in southern cities.

Yet, others believe Dr. King, through his well-publicized protests, succeeded in bringing the problems of northern racism to national attention as well as building a multi-racial coalition in Chicago. In addition, a civil rights poverty and unemployment program called Operation Breadbasket (later called Operation PUSH and now Rainbow PUSH) gained national attention and was put under the leadership of a young Rev. Jesse Jackson. The original Operation Breadbasket organization sought to put "bread, money, and income into the baskets of Black and poor people" through food distribution programs as well as organizing voter registration drives, tenant unions, job training, and housing projects.

"Another basic challenge is to discover how to organize our strength into economic and political power. Indeed, one of the great problems that the Negro confronts is his lack of power. From the old plantations of the South to the newer ghettos of the North, the Negro has been confined to a life of voicelessness and powerlessness. The plantation and the ghetto were created by those who had power, both to confine those who had no power and to perpetuate their powerlessness. Now the problem of transforming the ghetto, therefore, is a problem of power, a confrontation between the forces of power demanding change and the forces of power dedicated to the preserving of the status quo."

Dr. Martin L. King
August 1967

Topic: WHY Martin Luther King, Jr.: What did he do? Why does it matter?

INSTRUCTIONS

Overview: Far too often our students do not see the connection between the history of our country and their present context and reality. While we tell them that they need to care, we may not always figure out the best way to help them see themselves and their own self-interest in the struggles of the past. It is our job as educators to challenge them to move past their current understanding, to bring the tools of critical thought and analysis to their interpretation of the past, and to build a context for their understanding of both the present and future.

Goal: Provide students with the opportunity to explore the work of Martin Luther King, Jr. through the Civil Rights Movement, looking specifically at the strategies he employed and their relevance to the lives and experiences of students today.

Number of people: unlimited

Student materials: paper, pen/pencil, and copies of activities

Teacher materials: projector, instructions, transparency, and copy of each activity

Time: Each session has been designed to last between 45 and 60 minutes. Sessions can be consolidated. If you are having an important discussion, feel free to postpone or even eliminate one or more of the activities. Together we are working to stimulate student thought, challenge their and our own ideas, and together to move toward an understanding of social change in our current context. Feel free to respond to the needs of your specific class.

Directions:

Session Five: Memphis Sanitation Worker's Strike/Poor People's Campaign

1. Have students read both the Memphis Sanitation Worker's Strike Selection and the Poor People's Campaign selection. (12-15 minutes)
2. Take a few moments to review the selections with students using the following discussion questions: (10-15 minutes)
 - a. Why did MLK want to help the sanitation workers?
 - b. Why would a person sacrifice a comfortable life style to support sanitation workers?
 - c. Did the sanitation workers win their fight?
 - d. Why did they describe their victory as bittersweet?
 - e. Why did MLK believe that poor people needed to band together, not just black people?
 - f. Was the Poor People's Campaign a good direction for the movement to take?

3. Pass out Memphis Sanitation Worker's Strike/Poor People's Campaign Worksheet One and ask students to answer each essay question. Ask students to share answers. Collect work to be turned in to the service learning office. (20 minutes)

Conclusion: *(This can be conducted as a separate session or in combination with Session Five if time permits.)*

1. Post signs on four sections of the classroom that read: Strongly Agree, Agree, Strongly Disagree, and Disagree.
2. Read each of the statements listed at the end of the directions. Explain to students that all of the statements are based on opinion not fact. Students should listen to the statement and then, based on their own opinion, move to the sign that represents their viewpoint for that particular statement.
3. In their small groups by each sign, students should select a spokesperson and discuss the issue, making sure that the spokesperson is clear about each group member's perspective.
4. Each spokesperson should present the views of their group to the class. If time allows, each group should have the opportunity to respond after hearing the other groups' responses.
5. Ask students to pair off and complete the final survey form.

Statements:

1. If you are focused on success, you can only worry about yourself. You have to better yourself first, and then you can go back and help your own people.
2. Life is easier and fairer today for African Americans than it was prior to the Civil Rights Movement.
3. MLK was right; people of color need to stand together based on shared issues whether or not they are from the same ethnic background.

1968 Memphis Sanitation Worker's Strike

"You are demanding that this city will respect the dignity of labor. So often we overlook the worth and the significance of those who are not in professional jobs, of those who are not in the so-called big jobs. But let me say to you tonight that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity and it has worth."

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., March 1968

Memphis Tennessee

On Tuesday, February 1, 1968, the accidental activation of a packer blade in the back of a garbage truck fatally crushed two Memphis sanitation workers, Echol Cole and Robert Walker. "That's when the men said, 'We're tired and we ain't going to take it anymore,'" recalls one Memphis sanitation worker. "If you bend your back, people can ride it. But if you stand up straight, people *can't* ride your back. And that's what we did...we stood up straight."

On Monday, February 12, 1968, 1,200 Memphis sanitation and public employees went on strike for job safety, better wages and benefits, and union recognition. Memphis Mayor Henry Loeb held that the strike was illegal and refused to meet with them as long as the employees were out on strike. Black and white civic groups in Memphis tried to resolve the conflict, but the mayor held to his position. The sanitation workers and their supporters marched daily to pressure the mayor and city council to recognize the sanitation unit as an official union.

"We had no union, no vacation, no benefits, no pensions, no overtime. The pay was 94 cents an hour. We had to do whatever they told us to do, and if you were hurt on the job, you got nothing," said a sanitation worker during the 1960's. The men wore signs that read: 'I Am A Man,' a slogan that continued years after in other civil rights campaigns. Their struggle for economic justice also became a fight for racial equality, dignity, and respect.



As the strike continued more than 10,000 tons of garbage piled up. The Memphis NAACP members and the sanitation workers called for a citywide boycott of downtown merchants. The Memphis mayor obtained a court injunction to keep union from staging demonstrations or picketing. Memphis police attacked strikers during marches in the streets of Memphis.

The strike accomplished a remarkable rallying of the African American community. The pent-up frustrations of the community were brought dramatically to the surface, with the strike serving as a catalyst to unify the city's 200,000 African Americans, who represented 36% of the population of Memphis.

On Tuesday, March 5, 1968, ministers announced the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would come to Memphis, to support the sanitation and help organize a citywide march. The march, led by Dr. King, was interrupted by violence. Police moved into crowds with nightsticks, mace, tear gas, and gunfire. A 16-year-old boy, Larry Payne, was shot to death. Police also arrested 280 people and 60 were injured, mostly blacks.

On Wednesday, April 3, 1968, Dr. King delivered his "I've Been To The Mountaintop" address. Tragically, that would be his last speech. The next day, on Thursday, April 4th, a sniper captured and identified as James Earl Ray, assassinated Dr. King as he stood on the balcony outside his room at the Lorraine Hotel. On Monday, April 8th, Mrs. King and dozens of national figures led a peaceful memorial march through downtown in tribute to Dr. King and in support of the strike.

On Wednesday, April 10th, 1968, the city's mayor and union officials began meeting, mostly without publicity. On Tuesday, April 16th, union leaders announced that an agreement had been reached. The strikers voted to accept it, which ended the strike.

Although the workers won collective bargaining rights about two weeks after King's death, the victory was bittersweet. "We were proud of what we had gained, but we were sorry about what we had lost. That was part of Dr. King's life...I felt that he felt justified by dying for men who were on the bottom of the ladder," said one sanitation worker, "he came to see about us, and that makes me think about him as being one of the greatest men ever."

"Negroes are almost entirely a working people. There are pitifully few Negro millionaires, and few Negro employers. Our needs are identical with labor's needs — decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community. That is why Negroes support labor's demands and fight laws which curb labor. That is why the labor-hater and labor-baiter is virtually always a twin-headed creature spewing anti-Negro epithets from one mouth and anti-labor propaganda from the other mouth."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

1968 POOR PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN

"This is America's opportunity to help bridge the gulf between the haves and the have-nots. The question is whether America will do it. There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that we now have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will."

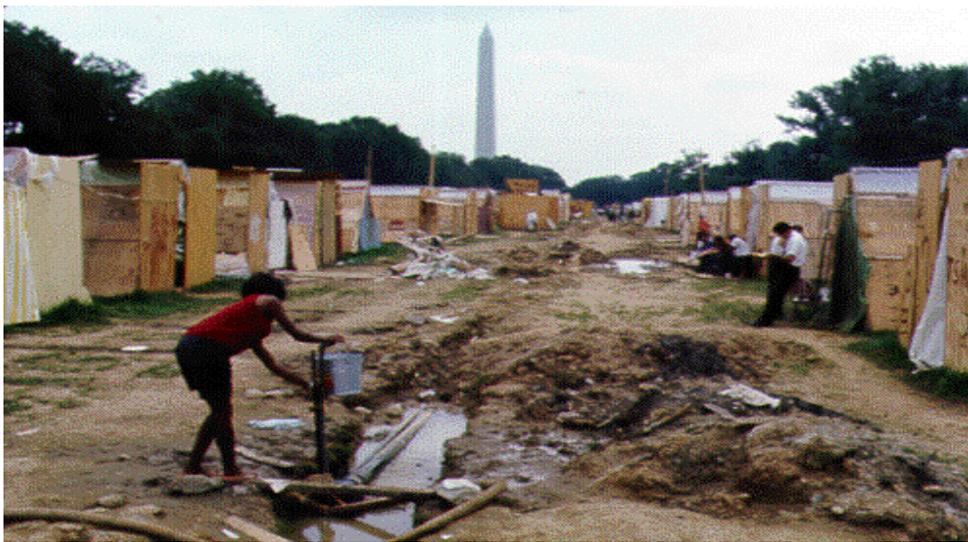
Dr. Martin Luther King

In November 1967, Dr. Martin L. King and his staff met to discuss the direction of the Civil Rights movement. Dr. King and his staff decided to launch the Poor People's Campaign, a movement to broadly address economic inequalities with non-violent direct action.

The idea for the Poor People's campaign grew out of what King termed the "second phase" of the civil rights struggle. After the "first phase" had exposed the problems of segregation through non-violence, King hoped to focus the nation on economic inequality and poverty. The campaign also differed from previous civil rights campaigns, as it aimed to address the struggles of a cross-section of minority groups. "It must not be just black people," argued King, "it must be all poor people. We must include American Indians, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, and even poor whites."

The Poor People's Campaign was to be the most massive, widespread campaign of civil disobedience undertaken by a movement. They aimed to bring 1,500 protesters to Washington, D.C. to lobby Congress and other governmental agencies for an "economic bill of rights." Specifically, the campaign requested a thirty billion dollar anti-poverty package that would include a commitment to full employment, a guaranteed annual income measure, and increased construction of low-income housing.

Protest activities in Washington were to be supported by simultaneous demonstrations throughout the country. Despite the division with other Civil Rights leaders over the campaign's feasibility, King embraced the campaign and traveled across the country speaking on poverty and went to "people-to-people tours" to recruit participants. Dr. King



would tell them, "Come with me to Washington, D.C., and join together with other poor folks

to pressure the Congress and President to pass legislation to end poverty, illiteracy, homelessness and other problems faced by minorities and the poor in the United States.”

However on April 4th, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis. The King family and other Civil Rights leaders decided to go on with the Poor People’s Campaign to honor Dr. King. In May, 1968, the first wave of demonstrators arrived in Washington, D.C. Demonstrators erected a camp called “Resurrection City” on a 16 acre site near Lincoln Monument, which was made up of tents and shacks to house the protesters.

Rev. Ralph Abernathy, the successor to the slain Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began the Poor People's Campaign with the proclamation that “the poor are no longer divided. We are not going to let the white man put us down anymore. It's not white power, and I'll give you some news, it's not black power, either. It's poor power and we're going to use it.” Demonstrators were then sent out to various federal agencies to protest and spread the message of the campaign.

The Poor People's Campaign was a gathering for racial and economic concerns that brought the poor, including those who were Black, White, Indian, and Hispanic to live in shantytowns and demonstrate daily in Washington, D.C. from May 14th until June 24th, 1968.

“In a few weeks some of us are coming to Washington to see if the will is still alive in this nation. We are coming to Washington in a Poor People’s Campaign. Yes, we are going to bring the tired, the poor, the huddled masses. We are going to bring those who have known long years of hurt and neglect. We are going to bring those who have come to feel that life is a long and desolate corridor with no exit signs.”

Dr. Martin Luther King
March 1968

Memphis Sanitation Workers' Strike/Poor People's Campaign

Worksheet One

Answer all of the following questions in complete answers:

- 1) Martin Luther King, Jr. talks about the "dignity of labor." He says "so often we overlook those who...are not in the so-called big jobs. But let me say to you tonight that whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity and it has worth."

Do you agree that menial labor has dignity and worth? In what ways do you treat "menial" workers (for example, janitors, food service people, garbage men) with respect and dignity? Why or why not?

- 2) "If you bend your back, people can ride it. But if you stand up straight, people can't ride your back. And that's what we did...we stood up straight."
 - a. Re-write the quote in your own words:

b. Write a paragraph about how and when you have “stood up straight,” or an example of someone in your life who has done so.

c. Martin Luther King, Jr. believed that standing up straight could be done non-violently. Do you believe that? Why or why not?

3) Why did Dr. King feel it was important to bring together different racial groups and ethnic groups for the Poor People’s Campaign?

4) What are the advantages and disadvantages of organizing different racial and ethnic groups around a cause?

5) In addition to poverty, what are other issues that different racial groups could organize around?

