

Arkansas Peace Week Lesson Plan Ideas – “End racism. Build peace.”

Arkansas Peace Week lesson plans adapt the teaching and witness of Martin Luther King, Jr, challenging youth to learn and live his principles of nonviolence. The goal is to create an awareness of nonviolent principles and practice as a powerful way to heal, transform and empower our lives and communities.

- **Resolving Conflicts Without Violence**
- **Making Amends and Forgiving Others**
- **Serving Others in Need**
- **Standing with Others Who Are Treated Unfairly**
- **Speaking Out Against Injustice**

Suggested Vocabulary Words

Suffer	Amends	Vain
Bitter	Acceptance	Leadership
Conflict	Humanity	Courage

I. **Nonviolent Conflict Resolution**

“You must be willing to suffer the anger or the opponent, and yet not return anger. You must not become bitter.” Stride Toward Freedom- MLK

- How can you remind yourself to remain calm in situations of conflict?
- What can you do to prevent yourself from becoming bitter?

We often think that “fight” or “flight” are our only two choices in a conflict, but we have more options than that. Think of those options rather than fighting or running in the following situations.

Situation #1-Someone in your class has accused you of stealing their pencil-
What would you do? How do you think Dr. King would have reacted?

Situation #2-You are pushed out of the way while getting a drink at the water fountain by a classmate-

What would you do? How do you think Dr. King would have reacted?

II. Making Amends and Forgiving Others

"It is impossible even to begin the act of loving one's enemies without the prior acceptance of the necessity, over and over again, of forgiving those who inflict evil and injury upon us... Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning."

Strength to Love- MLK

- Name times when you have been forgiven.
- Who have you forgiven? Was it easy or hard?

"There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies." Strength to Love- MLK

III. Serving Others in Need

"And I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity...And that is all I want to say. If I can help somebody as I pass along; if I can cheer somebody with a song; if I can show somebody he's traveling wrong; then my living will not be in vain..." Excerpts from ideas about his own eulogy spoken by MLK at Ebenezer Baptist Church-Feb. 1968

- What makes a "good life"? A life that is not "in vain" (wasted)?
- What would you like for people to remember about you?
- What things can you do in your life that will help others and make a difference?

IV. Standing with Others Who Are Treated Unfairly

"Courage faces fear and thereby masters it. Cowardice represses fear and is thereby mastered by it." Strength to Love- MLK

At the age of 26, Dr. King agreed to help with the Montgomery Bus Boycott. These activities and protests resulted from racism against African Americans riding the buses and applying for jobs with the bus company.

Dr. King received a threatening phone call at his home warning him not to come to Montgomery, AL. He was frightened for himself and his family.

He thought about quitting but instead prayed- *"I am here taking a stand for what I believe is right. But now I am afraid. The people are looking to me for leadership. If I stand before them without strength and courage, they too will falter. I am at the end of my powers. I have nothing left... I can't face it alone."*

IV. Standing with Others Who Are Treated Unfairly (continued)

- What makes you fearful? What do you do about it?
- Talk about times that you have seen another person treating someone unfairly. What did you do about it? Were you afraid to help? What gave you courage?
- Who are some of the most courageous people today? Why makes them courageous?

V. Speaking Out Against Injustice

“Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love; we must meet physical force with soul force.” Stride toward Freedom-MLK

“We will have to repent ...words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people.” Letter from a Birmingham City Jail- MLK

- What is injustice? What injustices have you seen? What can we do about it?
- Name a part from one of the Dr. King speeches and writings that makes you want to help others.

How do the words and teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. promote peace? What was his idea of how we can have peace?

How I Will Help Dr. King's Dream Come True

“And so today I still have a dream. People will rise up and come to see that they are made to live together as brothers and sisters.” - Dr. King

I will help Dr. King's dream come true by:

Name: _____

I PLEDGE TO USE MY WORDS
TO SPEAK IN A KIND WAY.
I PLEDGE
TO HELP OTHERS AS I GO
THROUGHOUT MY DAY. I PLEDGE TO
CARE FOR OUR EARTH
WITH MY HEALING HEART AND HANDS. I PLEDGE TO
RESPECT PEOPLE
IN EACH AND EVERY LAND.
I PLEDGE TO JOIN TOGETHER AS WE
UNITE THE BIG AND SMALL.
I PLEDGE TO DO MY PART TO
CREATE PEACE
FOR ONE AND ALL!