



DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

LESSON PLAN FOR MUSEUM EDUCATORS | **THEME:** *Children Can Make A Difference*

*Published by Raising Citizens – a partnership
between Freedom’s Feast and the
Children’s Museum of Manhattan*

Program Overview

- This program celebrates Dr. King's life and legacy and the importance of community service.
- Children will learn about community involvement and civic responsibility through listening and discussing *Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story*, a short children's book by Ruby Bridges. The book is about the role that a six-year-old played in the 1960s during the Civil Rights Movement.
- The reading is followed by a hands-on activity; children create a "Make a Difference" Pledge Card that reflects their commitment to service at home and in their community.

Program Outline

1. Welcome and Program Introduction
2. Discussion (see Questions & Images)
3. Read *Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story* by Ruby Bridges
4. Follow-up Discussion
5. Hands-on Activity
6. Sharing and Reflection

Questions for Discussion

- Who was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?
- Why do we celebrate his life and accomplishments?
- What do you like about Ruby and her story?
- How is it different today now that there are laws saying schools cannot be “separate?”
- What does Ruby do today?
- What are some the things you can do to make your home or school better?
- What can you do on your block or in your neighborhood to help others and make your community a better place to live?

Images for Discussion



Print on reverse of slide# 5

- Image #1 (top left): Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and wife Coretta Scott King lead demonstrators on the fourth day of their march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.
- Image #2 (top right): King was arrested many times during his lifetime for acts of civil disobedience. In 1960, he joined black college students in a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter. Presidential candidate John F. Kennedy interceded to have King released from jail, an action that is credited with helping Kennedy to be elected President.
- Image #3 (bottom left): In 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act, which outlawed racial segregation in publicly-owned facilities. Here, President Lyndon B. Johnson shakes the hand of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the signing of the landmark piece of legislation.
- Image #4 (bottom right): Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. waves to supporters from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. during the "March on Washington." There, he delivered the "I Have a Dream" speech, which boosted public support for civil rights. Many consider this one of the greatest speeches of the 20th century.
- All photos courtesy of National Geographic.

Reading Exercise

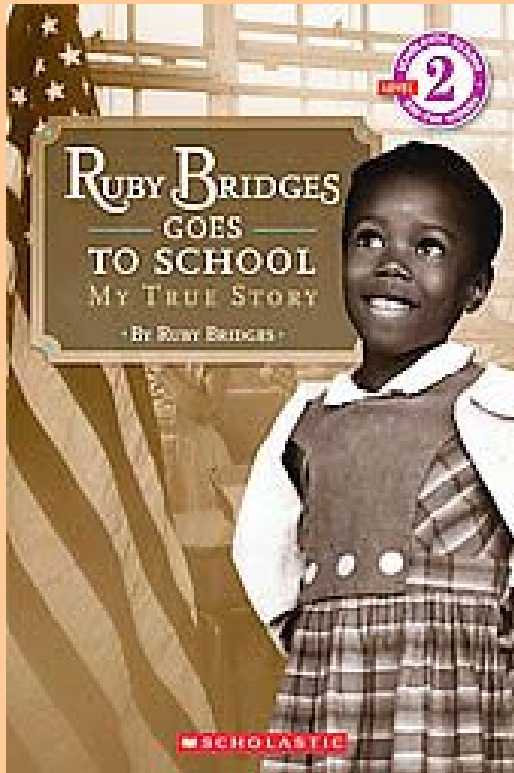


Photo: Amazon.com

- Students will read *Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story* by Ruby Bridges.
- Ruby Bridges made history when she became the first African-American student to attend an all-white elementary school in the South.
- The courage she exemplified as a six-year-old student is still admired today.

Introductory Information

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a pastor at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He was an important figure of the modern era and a courageous leader of the civil rights movement. The non-violent movements and marches he led brought significant changes in American life throughout the 1950s and 60s.
- In the world that Martin Luther King, Jr. was born into, black people were kept separate from white people. This was called segregation. Almost everywhere was segregated: schools, swimming pools, libraries, restaurants, and even water fountains. There were jobs that black people were not allowed to do and neighborhoods where black people were not allowed to live. Martin Luther King Jr. organized protests saying that laws that separated black and white people in neighborhoods, schools and restaurants were unfair. These protests became known as [the Civil Rights Movement](#).
- Children of all ages were also a part of the Civil Rights Movement along with their parents, brothers and sisters. Thousands of young people and children joined adults in the peaceful marches for Civil Rights. One young girl who made a contribution for Civil Rights was [Ruby Bridges](#). Everyone, no matter how small or young, can do something to change the world for the better. You don't have to do big things. Many small things done by lots of people can make things better and even children can make a change.

Hands-on Activity

- Children decorate a pledge with Martin Luther King, Jr.'s image and his quote *“Everyone can be great because everyone can serve.”* On the back of the pledge, children write down what they will do to make a difference in their home and community.

Materials

- Copies of *Make A Difference Pledge* template (print on cardstock and precut)
- Markers
- Ribbon for hanging pledge
- Assorted collage materials and hole punchers
- Image of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Image of Martin Luther King, Jr. at a civil rights protest
- Image of Ruby Bridges
- A copy of *Ruby Bridges Goes to School: My True Story* by Ruby Bridges

Project Steps

- **Step 1** Show an example of the pledge and Dr. King's quote "*Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve*" Discuss how the quote reflects how Dr. King wanted to be remembered for his service to humanity and believed that everyone could help to make the world better.
- **Step 2** Brainstorm ways children can make a difference in their homes, schools and communities.
- **Step 3** Pass out pledges and art materials.
- **Step 4** Children decorate the front of their pledges and attach the ribbon.
- **Step 5** Children write their personal pledges.
- **Step 6** Have children share their pledges with each other.

Background Resources

- Freedom's Feast: Online resources to get the most out of your American holiday celebrations
<http://freedomfeast.us/mlk-day/index.html>
- The King Center: Dedicated to Dr. King's life and legacy since 1968
<http://www.thekingcenter.org/kingcenter/Welcome.aspx>
- Ruby Bridges Foundation Official Website
<http://rubybridgesfoundation.org/>