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Activity Guide

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A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.

ABOUT THE STORY

This is part of a picture book biography series designed to introduce beginning readers to famous Americans. *A Picture Book of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, portrays the major events of the life of the civil rights leader and of his drive to free African-Americans from unfair laws and discrimination.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David A. Adler has become well respected through his many biographical works which introduce young readers to famous Americans. In his books, Adler emphasizes the triumphant success of the person in light of the challenges they faced during their lives. There are currently over 25 titles in his biographical series "A Picture Book of...", many of which are also available as Live Oak Media Readalongs. Mr. Adler lives in New York with his wife and children.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Robert Casilla, whose work has appeared in *Black Experience* magazine, *The New York Times*, and a number of other publications, is a graduate of the School of Visual Arts in New York City. He has illustrated several biographies of important Americans. He lives with his wife and son in Yonkers, New York.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Explain to the group that before Martin Luther King, Jr., led the fight for freedom for African-Americans, there were many unjust laws and conditions restricting blacks in America. In many parts of the South, African-Americans could not vote, nor could they go to the same schools or use the same public restrooms or eat in the same restaurants as whites. Much of that changed during the 1950s and 1960s because of the work of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Vocabulary

Review the following words and their definitions with the group. Ask volunteers to use each word in a sentence.

pastor
bias

boycott
riots

equal
voting

segregated
prejudice

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "What does the 'White Only' sign mean?"
- "Why did the African-Americans in Montgomery refuse to ride the buses?"
- "What was Dr. King's 'dream'?"
- "Why did Dr. King go to Memphis in 1968?"
- "What happened to him in Memphis?"
- "How has America changed because of Dr. King?" (Draw conclusions)
- "What kind of person do you think Martin Luther King, Jr., was? Explain." (Make judgments)

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Social Studies: A Map of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Help children make maps of the American South. Provide atlases or other maps for reference. They can locate these places that were important in Martin Luther King's life on their maps: Atlanta; Georgia; Memphis; Tennessee; Montgomery; Alabama.

Music: Song of Protest

Many songs, such as "We Shall Overcome," were written for protest during the Civil Rights era. Play some of these songs for the group. Discuss the words and sentiments of the songs with the group and talk about the effects these songs might have had on the protesters.

Art: Birthday Holidays

Children can work in groups to create calendars with birthday holidays marked. Have them mark the days that famous people's birthdays are celebrated, including Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. Children can put their own birthdays on the calendars as well. Encourage them to illustrate their calendars with scenes showing the months.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Other Civil Rights Leaders

Have children look up information on one of these Civil Rights leaders on the Internet: Ralph Abernathy, Julian Bond, Jesse Jackson, and Coretta Scott King. They can use the subject's name as a keyword. Ask them to find three facts about the person they are researching and report on them to the class.