

Name: _____

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

by Cynthia Sherwood

Every January, we honor the man who dreamed of equality for all Americans. Martin Luther King, Jr., fought for civil rights for people of every race. In his most famous speech given in 1963, Dr. King spoke these powerful words:

I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

His inspiring speeches and the non-violent protests he led touched the hearts of many Americans and pushed Congress into action. Lawmakers passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 banning racial segregation in schools, offices, and public places.

Dr. King was born in Georgia in 1929. He attended Black-only schools, where he excelled and finished high school at age fifteen. Dr. King continued his education in college and graduate school, and later became pastor of a Baptist church in Atlanta.

He used his leadership to work for civil rights. In 1955, Dr. King helped organize the first large-scale protest by Black Americans who were tired of being forced to sit in the back of public buses. The bus boycott lasted more than a year, until the U.S. Supreme Court declared segregation on buses illegal.



Dr. King traveled millions of miles to head up other massive protests against unequal treatment of Black Americans. He directed the peaceful march of a quarter-million Americans on Washington, DC, where he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech. At age 35, Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. King was hated by some who opposed his message. He was arrested twenty times, attacked at least four times, and his home was fire-bombed. In 1968 at the age of 39, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. It was a tragic, violent end to a man who preached the importance of peaceful protest.

In recognition of this great civil rights leader, Congress has named the third Monday in January as Martin Luther King Day, a national holiday.

"I Have A Dream"

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1. In 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that segregation on buses was illegal. What does this mean?
 - a. The court said that white people were now required to sit in the back of the bus.
 - b. The court said that bus companies could not tell passengers where to sit, based on the color of their skin.
 - c. The court required Black people and white people to sit next to each other on buses.

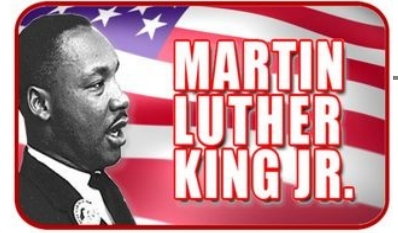
2. What type of Civil Rights protests did Martin Luther King Jr. support?
 - a. violent protests
 - b. protests in support of racial segregation
 - c. protests against higher taxes
 - d. peaceful protests without violence

3. How many people attended Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech?
 - a. 100,000
 - b. 250,000
 - c. 500,000
 - d. 1,000,000

4. When is Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrated?
 - a. in the beginning of January
 - b. on the third Sunday in January
 - c. about mid-January
 - d. the last Monday in January

5. In what year did Martin Luther King Jr. receive the Nobel Peace Prize?
 - a. 1962
 - b. 1964
 - c. 1966
 - d. 1968

ANSWER KEY



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