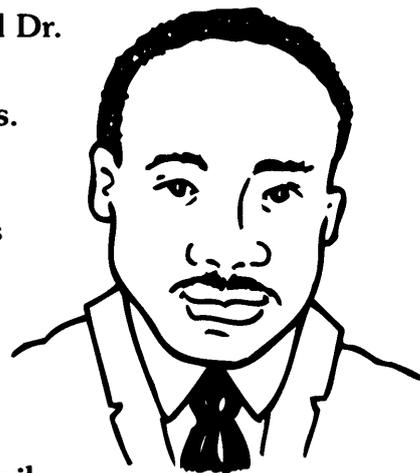


Martin Luther King Day - Jan. 15th!

Few in the history of Black America have inspired a nation as did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He has been one of the country's most dynamic leaders in the fight for peaceful equality of all individuals.

Martin Luther King was born on January 15, 1929 in Atlanta, Georgia. His father was a well-known minister of one of Atlanta's leading black churches. In 1947, he was ordained a Baptist minister and later accepted the pastorship of Dexter Avenue Baptist church in Montgomery, Alabama. In 1953, he married Coretta Scott and together they raised four children.



During the 1950's, Martin Luther King became a leader in the Civil Rights Movement overtaking the South. His first challenge was the boycotting of segregated buses in Montgomery, Alabama. Rosa Parks, a black seamstress, refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. The arrest of Mrs. Parks triggered the 382-day boycott by black passengers. Many of the whites blamed Dr. King for the success of the boycott and threats on his life became very real when a bomb exploded on his family's front porch. However, Dr. King stood fast in his conviction of non-violence and urged his people to forgive their enemies and achieve a peaceful solution to their problems. The bus boycott was recognized as a clear victory for nonviolent protest and Dr. King was regarded as a highly respected leader in the movement.

Dr. King took part in many marches and demonstrations. A huge civil rights movement in Birmingham, Alabama was followed by major drives for black voter registration. By 1967, Dr. King had been arrested and jailed thirteen times for his peaceful demonstrations.

On August 28, 1963, a massive civil rights demonstration was held in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. Dr. King spoke to more than 250,000 people about his "dream." This is the most famous excerpt from his speech:

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice."

"I have a dream that my four little 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..."

Martin Luther King Day - Jan. 15th!

President Kennedy presented the Civil Rights Bill to Congress in 1963. With the passage of this bill, Black American at last had a foothold on the road to freedom. With this bill and the Voting Rights Act, American Blacks began receiving the opportunities they needed in employment, housing, public schools and voting rights. Throughout the 1960s, Dr. King continued to work for the rights of Black Americans, advocating change through nonviolent protest.

In 1964, Dr. King was awarded the Noble Peace Prize for his work in overcoming unfairness and discrimination through nonviolent means. The Nobel Prize is probably the most recognized achievement award in the world. Each year this distinguished prize is awarded to a person or group of persons who have done the most for world peace. Dr. King received a medal and a monetary award of \$54,000. He believed the money and the award belonged to all Black Americans so he distributed the money to several Black organizations that were known to promote his views of nonviolent change. Dr. King was also chosen as "Man of the Year," by Time Magazine the same year.

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was tragically killed by a sniper outside a Memphis motel in Tennessee. The news of his death shocked the world. More than 100,000 people attended his funeral in Atlanta, Georgia.

Today his birthdate of January 15th is observed throughout the United States. It is a time for people everywhere to remember a great man and his great ideas of freedom and fairness for all people.



Write your own thoughts about Dr. Kings statement "...they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character..."
