

Equality

Lesson Plan

Introduction

Explain that all groups, over the course of American history, have not always had the same civil rights. A civil right is an enforceable right or privilege, which if interfered with by another gives rise to an action for injury. Examples of civil rights are freedom of speech, press, assembly, the right to vote, freedom from involuntary servitude, and the right to equality in public places. Discrimination occurs when the civil rights of an individual are denied or interfered with because of their membership in a particular group or class. Statutes have been enacted to prevent discrimination based on a person's race, sex, religion, age, previous condition of servitude, physical limitation, national origin, and, in some instances, sexual preference.

1. Use the handout or project on the Conference Center TV **"Civil Rights: An Overview"** to explain the meaning of "civil rights" and "discrimination."
2. Use **"Discrimination in America"** to identify the groups that experienced discrimination. This visual identifies the groups that experienced discrimination and the kinds of discrimination that they experienced. Explain that the 1960s Civil Rights Movement in America aimed to help all of the groups that experienced discrimination. This era is particularly noted for the efforts to end discrimination against African Americans because there was intense discrimination in all areas of life against them.
3. Use **"Timeline"** to help students understand the course of American history. Point out the major eras in American history, with emphasis upon the period of slavery and the era of discrimination that followed. Have the students express how the period of Jim Crow Laws and discrimination led to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.

Show Photo of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Guide the class to develop an understanding of the efforts to end discrimination and bring about equality for all citizens in America. Show the picture of Martin Luther King, Jr. Explain that Dr. King led the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s to gain equal rights for all Americans.

Activity 1:

Distribute a copy of **"The Life of Martin Luther King, Jr."** to each student. Explain that this reading about Dr. King is helpful in understanding the efforts to end discrimination and bring equality to all citizens in America. This reading can be completed silently or orally in class, with the students sharing in the oral reading.

Activity 2:

Distribute copies of the **"Testing Your Knowledge"** worksheet. After carefully reading the passage, have students complete the questions. Students may refer to the reading, if needed.



Civil Rights: An Overview

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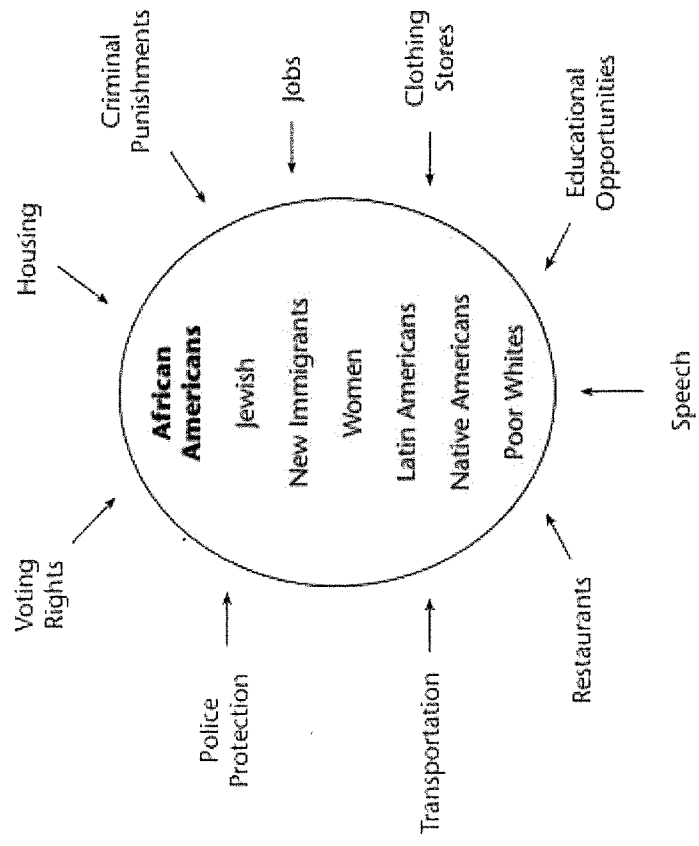
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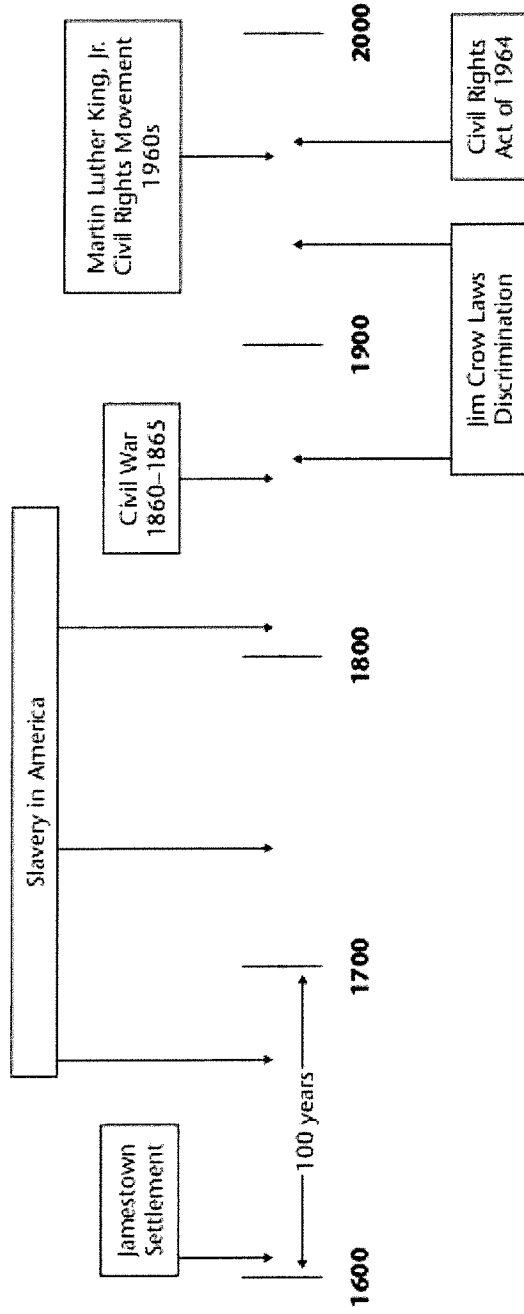
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DISCRIMINATION IN AMERICA



Timeline



Equality

Activity 1

The Life of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Any number of historic moments in the civil rights struggle have been used to identify Martin Luther King, Jr.—prime mover of the Montgomery bus boycott, keynote speaker at the March on Washington, youngest Nobel Peace Prize laureate. But in retrospect, single events are less important than the fact that King, and his policy of nonviolent protest, was the dominant force in the Civil Rights Movement during its decade of greatest achievement, from 1957 to 1968.

King was born Michael Luther King in Atlanta on January 15, 1929—one of three children of Martin Luther King, Sr., pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church, and Alberta (Williams) King, a former schoolteacher. (He was renamed “Martin” when he was about 6 years old.)

After going to local grammar and high schools, King enrolled in Morehouse College in Atlanta in 1944. He wasn’t planning to enter the ministry, but then he met Dr. Benjamin Mays, a scholar whose manner and bearing convinced him that a religious career could be intellectually satisfying as well. After receiving his bachelor’s degree in 1948, King attended Crozer Theological Seminary in Chester, Pennsylvania, winning the Plafker Award as the outstanding student of his graduating class and the J. Lewis Crozer Fellowship. King completed the coursework for his doctorate in 1953 and was granted the degree two years later upon completion of his dissertation.

Married by then, King returned to the South to become pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. Here, he made his first mark on the Civil Rights Movement by mobilizing the African American community during a 382-day boycott of the city’s bus lines. King overcame arrest and other violent harassment, including the bombing of his home. Ultimately, the U.S. Supreme Court declared bus segregation unconstitutional.

A national hero and a civil rights figure of growing importance, King summoned together a number of African American leaders in 1957 and laid the groundwork for the organization now known as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). King was elected as its president, and he soon began helping other communities organize their own protests against discrimination.

After finishing his first book and making a trip to India, King returned to the United States in 1960 to become co-pastor, with his father, of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Three years later, King’s nonviolent tactics were put to their most severe test in Birmingham during a mass protest for fair hiring practices and the desegregation of department store facilities. Police brutality used against the marchers dramatized the plight of African Americans to the nation at large, with enormous impact. King was arrested, but his voice was not silenced: He wrote “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” to refute his critics. Later that year King was a principal speaker at the historic March on Washington, where he delivered one of the most passionate addresses of his career. Time magazine designated him as its Person of the Year for 1963. A few months later he was named recipient of the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize. When he returned from Norway, where he had gone to accept the award, King took on new challenges. In Selma, Alabama, he led a voter-registration campaign that ended in the

Selma-to-Montgomery Freedom March. King next brought his crusade to Chicago, where he launched programs to rehabilitate the slums and provide housing.

In the North, however, King soon discovered that young and angry African Americans cared little for his preaching and even less for his pleas for peaceful protest. Their disenchantment was one of the reasons he rallied behind a new cause: the war in Vietnam.

Although he was trying to create a new coalition based on equal support for peace and civil rights, it caused an immediate rift. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) saw King's shift of emphasis as "a serious tactical mistake." The Urban League warned that the "limited resources" of the Civil Rights Movement would be spread too thin.

But from the vantage point of history, King's timing was superb. Students, professors, intellectuals, clergymen, and reformers rushed into the movement. Then King turned his attention to the domestic issue that he felt was directly related to the Vietnam struggle: poverty. He called for a guaranteed family income, he threatened national boycotts, and he spoke of disrupting entire cities with nonviolent "camp-ins." With this in mind, he began to plan a massive march of the poor on Washington, D.C., envisioning a demonstration of such intensity and size that Congress would have to recognize and deal with the huge number of desperate and downtrodden Americans.

King interrupted these plans to lend his support to the Memphis sanitation men's strike. He wanted to discourage violence, and he wanted to focus national attention on the plight of the poor, unorganized workers of the city. The men were bargaining for basic union representation and long overdue raises.

But he never got back to his poverty plans. Death came for King on April 4, 1968, on the balcony of the Lorraine Hotel just off Beale Street. While standing outside with Jesse Jackson and Ralph Abernathy, King was shot in the neck by a rifle bullet. His death caused a wave of violence in major cities across the country.

However, King's legacy has lived on. In 1969, his widow, Coretta Scott King, organized the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Non-Violent Social Change. Today it stands next to his beloved Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. His birthday, January 15, is a national holiday, celebrated each year with educational programs, artistic displays, and concerts throughout the United States. The Lorraine Hotel where he was shot is now the National Civil Rights Museum.

Equality

The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Testing Your Knowledge

Directions: This activity should be completed along with “The Life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.” reading. Read each item carefully, then circle the letter of the response that correctly completes the sentence.

1. The era of the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was most noted for _____.
 - a. Raising money
 - b. Nonviolent protest
 - c. Making political campaign speeches
 - d. Street fighting

2. The professional career of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was that of a _____.
 - a. Minister
 - b. Teacher
 - c. Physician
 - d. Union leader

3. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was married to _____.
 - a. Rosa Parks
 - b. Alberta Williams
 - c. Coretta Scott

4. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was given a special award for his work in civil rights. He went to Norway to receive _____.
 - a. The J. Lewis Crozer Fellowship
 - b. The Nobel Peace Prize
 - c. Time Person of the Year for 1963
 - d. The Plafker Award

5. The strategies that Dr. King used to get additional civil rights included:
 - a. Boycotts
 - b. “Camp-ins”
 - c. Street marches
 - d. Demonstrations
 - e. All of the above

6. During his lifetime, Dr. King tried to help _____.
 - a. The poor
 - b. African Americans who could not vote

- c. Union workers who were underpaid
 - d. Families who could not get fair housing
 - e. All of the above
7. In Alabama after being jailed for protesting, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote his famous "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" in the year ____.
- a. 1953
 - b. 1957
 - c. 1960
 - d. 1963
8. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and killed in ____ in Memphis, Tennessee.
- a. 1963
 - b. 1964
 - c. 1968
 - d. 1969
9. Many government leaders, police officials, and anti-civil rights groups tried to stop the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by ____.
- a. Bombing his home
 - b. Putting him in jail
 - c. Violent harassment
 - d. All of the above
10. The civil rights work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. contributed to change in ____.
- a. Voting rights for African Americans
 - b. Access to better housing
 - c. Access to public transportation
 - d. Better job opportunities
 - e. Improved conditions for all poor people in America
 - f. All of the above