

***Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement***  
***Suggested Grades: Grades K through Grade 3***  
***Lesson by: Meagan McCormick***

(Be sure to contact the Castellani Art Museum for a copy of the teacher resource guide containing the images, activities, and additional information associated with this lesson plan.)

## **Disciplines: NYS Learning Standards**

### **◆ Social Studies**

**Standard 1:** History of the United States and New York

***Performance Indicator (1):*** The study of New York and the United States history requires an analysis of the development of American culture, its diversity and multicultural context, and the ways people are unified by many values, practices, and traditions.

***Performance Indicator (2):*** Important ideas, social and cultural values, beliefs, and traditions from New York State and the United States history illustrate the connections and interactions of people and events across time and from a variety of perspectives.

***Performance Indicator (3):*** Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

**Standard 5:** Civics, Citizenship, and Government

***Performance Indicator (1):*** The study of civics, citizenship, and government involves learning about political systems; the purposes of government and civic life; and the differing assumptions held by people across time and place regarding power, authority, governance, and law. (Adapted from *The National Standards for Civics and Government, 1994*)

***Performance Indicator (2):*** The state and federal governments established by the Constitutions of the United States and the State of New York embody basic civic values (such as justice, honesty, self-discipline, due process, equality, majority rule with respect for minority rights, and respect for self, others, and property), principles and practices and establish a system of shared and limited government. (Adapted from *The National Standards for Civics and Government, 1994*)

***Performance Indicator (3):*** Central to civics and citizenship is an understanding of the roles of the citizen within American constitutional democracy and the scope of a citizen's rights and responsibilities.

### **◆ English Language Arts (ELA)**

**Standard 1:** Language for Information and Understanding

***Performance Indicator (1):*** Listening and reading to acquire information and understanding involves collecting data, facts, and ideas; discovering relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and using knowledge from oral, written, and electronic sources.

***Performance Indicator (2):*** Speaking and writing to acquire and transmit information requires asking probing and clarifying questions, interpreting information in one's own words, applying information from one context to another, and presenting the information and interpretation clearly, concisely, and comprehensibly.

**Standard 3:** Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

***Performance Indicator (1):*** Listening and reading to analyze and evaluate experiences, ideas, information, and issues requires using evaluative criteria from a variety of perspectives and being

able to recognize the difference in evaluations based on different sets of criteria.

***Performance Indicator (2):*** Speaking and writing for critical analysis and evaluation requires presenting opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information, and issues clearly, logically, and persuasively with reference to specific criteria on which the opinion or judgment is based.

**Standard 4:** Language for Social Interaction

***Performance Indicator (1):*** Oral communication in formal and informal settings requires the ability to talk with people of different ages, genders, and cultures to adapt presentations to different audiences, and to reflect how talk varies in different situations

### ◆ **The Arts- Visual Arts**

**Standard 1:** Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts

***Performance Indicator (1):*** Students will make works of art that explore different kinds of subject matter, topics, themes, and metaphors. Students will understand and use sensory elements, organizational principles, and expressive images to communicate their own ideas in works of art. Students will use a variety of art materials processes, mediums, and techniques, and use appropriate technologies for creating and exhibiting visual art works.

**Standard 2:** Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

***Performance Indicator (2):*** Students will know and use a variety of visual arts materials, techniques, and processes. Students will know about resources and opportunities for participation in visual arts in the community (exhibitions, libraries, museums, galleries) and use appropriate materials (art reproductions, slides, print materials, electronic media). Students will be aware of vocational options available in the visual arts.

**Standard 3:** Responding to and analyzing Works of Art

***Performance Indicator (3):*** Students will reflect on, interpret, and evaluate works of art, using the language of art criticism. Students will analyze the visual art characteristics of the natural and built environment and explain the social, cultural, psychological, and environmental dimensions of the visual arts. Students will compare the way in which a variety of ideas, themes, and concepts are expressed in other disciplines.

**Descriptive Title:** Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement

### **Context (Rationale):**

While slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865, former slaves were not treated fairly in many parts of the country. They were denied many rights that White Americans enjoyed. Many people would not hire Blacks for jobs or sell them homes. In some places, especially in Southern states, they were denied the right to vote. They found themselves segregated from the rest of the population. They could not use many public buildings, such as restaurants, movie theatres, or even public libraries that White people frequented or they were forced to use separate entrances. They were not allowed to ride in the front of buses in some places and could not even drink from the same water fountains as White people. Throughout many parts of the country, Black children attended separate schools from White children because of laws that re-enforced the idea of segregation of the races. In the 1950's and 60's things began to change. Tired of being treated unfairly and wanting the same Civil Rights that White people enjoyed, thousands of Blacks joined together to demand their rights. Inspired by the words of Civil Rights leader the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. Black and White protestors alike attempted peaceful demonstrations and boycotts to bring attention to the unjust laws and practices. In 1963 more than 200,000 people gathered in Washington, D.C. to ask the government to give Blacks equal rights. It was there that Dr. King gave his most memorable

speech *I Have a Dream*; a dream of full equality for everyone. In the decades that followed laws were passed that attempted to fulfill Dr. King's dream but many people still feel that more work is needed. Nevertheless the election of Barack Obama in 2008 was considered a defining moment in race relations. As they view artwork representing aspects of the Civil Rights Movement students should become more aware of the meaning of the word *segregation* and the importance of the work of courageous individuals who spoke out against injustice.

## **Performance Task:**

The student will be able to:

- Identify artwork that represents facets of the Civil Rights Movement
- Describe how the artwork illustrates images of segregation
- Identify methods used to protest segregation
- Describe the consequences of protest
- Identify important individuals who contributed to the Civil Rights Movement
- Describe major events that occurred during this period that would have lasting effects
- Create an American Dreams Worksheet that illustrates Dr. King's dream for America and his/her own dream for America. An oral explanation must accompany the assignment.

## **Art Resources:**

- *"DIGNITY"* 1972, Robert E. Dorksen, Castellani Art Museum
- *Kiss* 1963, Robert Longo, Castellani Art Museum
- *Harlem Night Club*, Serge Soudeikine, Castellani Art Museum
- *Birmingham Race Riot*, Andy Warhol, Castellani Art Museum
- *Students and Desks*, 1991, Pat Bacon, Castellani Art Museum

## **Art Materials:**

- Pencil
- Eraser
- Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- American Dreams Worksheet

## **Motivation:**

The teacher might motivate students by asking them how they would feel if they thought that a classmate was treating them unfairly. What would they do? Can people stand up for their rights without resorting to fighting or violence? For many years in the United States a group of people were treated unfairly not because of anything they did but simply because they were of a different race than the other people. Despite the laws and prejudices of many people, attempts were made by Civil Rights protestors to work for change in a peaceful way following the example of Martin Luther King Jr. The teacher will use the artwork in the Museum to help students understand the nature of segregation and the consequences of protest.

## **Presentation:**

1. The teacher will direct students into the gallery featuring artwork representative of the modern Civil Rights Movement.

2. After the students have been seated, the teacher will question them concerning their feelings of equal treatment using the motivational questions listed earlier in the lesson.
3. As an additional learning experiment, the teacher might have the children separate from one another according to their specific hair or eye color, forcing them to move to another part of the gallery. The students that remain with the Museum teacher will be given a special treat such as a sticker while the other children look on. After a short period of time the teacher will allow the separated students to rejoin the rest of the class.
4. The teacher will then ask the students that were separated how they felt about the separation. Did they think that they were being treated unfairly and why? After a short discussion the teacher will give the students who had been separated the same stickers as the other students.
5. At this time the teacher will give a brief description of life for Black Americans after the Civil War, especially in the south, and describe how a system of segregation developed intending to separate Blacks from Whites.
6. The teacher may need to define certain vocabulary terms with students so that they better understand the lesson. These terms include: boycott, equal, law, protest, and segregation.
7. The teacher will then have students study the various pieces of art in the gallery. With each artwork the teacher will ask specific questions concerning what students are looking at, what do they think is happening, how does it make them feel and how is it related to civil rights.
8. At some point the teacher will stress that the movement for racial equality attempted to make change through peaceful means and was guided by the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr.
9. The teacher will read to students the mini biography *Martin Luther King Jr.: A Man With a Dream* by Alyse Sweeney.
10. After completing the reading the teacher will talk to students about Dr. King's dreams about making America a better place. What were some problems that he wanted to solve? Next the teacher will ask the children what dreams they have to make the country better.
11. The teacher will then pass out the assignment **American Dreams**, explaining what the student are expected to do. Rather than write the dreams on the front of the worksheet, students will be expected to draw a picture to illustrate their dreams. Older students will be expected to write the meaning of the dream on the back side of the worksheet.
12. Students will be asked to share their work with the rest of the class and describe the meaning of their dreams.

## **Assessment Tools and Evidence:**

**Tools:** At the end of the session the teacher will ask students to share their dreams with the rest of the class. The teacher will ask the students questions about their assignment and allow other students to comment.

**Evidence:** The evidence of whether or not the students understood the influence of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement will be determined by their dream illustrations and explanations.

**Teacher Reflection/Follow Up:** Do the students understand the consequences of segregation and the desire for people to fight for their Civil Rights? Do they understand that standing up for equal rights means being able to do what is necessary so that everyone is treated equally? The teacher will make decisions based on the work created by the student.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## American Dreams

Martin Luther King, Jr., had a dream to make America a better place for all people. Write about his dream in the first bubble. Then think about your own dream for America. Draw your face in the oval. Then write your dream in the second bubble.

**Dr. King's Dream for America**



**My Dream for America**

Scholastic Teaching Resources, page 35