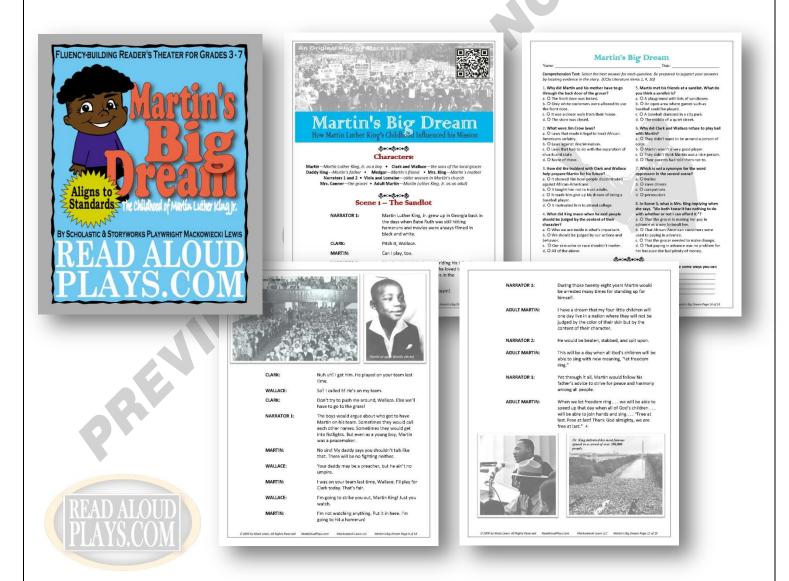
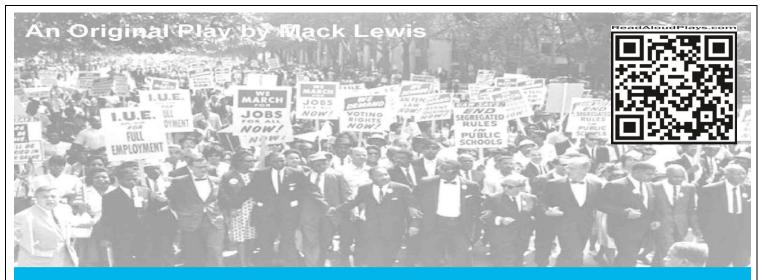


## Thank you for purchasing original readers theater from ReadAloudPlays.com!

"Martin's Big Dream" was originally published under the title "I Have a Dream" in the Jan./Feb. 2000 issue of Scholastic's *Storyworks* magazine to celebrate Black History Month and Martin Luther King Day. It tells the story of how a young Martin was prevented from playing baseball with two white boys in his neighborhood because of his race. The incident presumably influenced his activism for civil rights. Parts for 12 students plus numerous non-speaking extras and suitable for grades 4 and up. This play has been edited for cultural sensitivity, but please preview and pre-teach.

If the script meets your needs, please be sure to follow me and leave a positive review. Remember, anything less than 5 out of 5 stars is considered negative. Thanks!





# Martin Luther King's Childhood Influenced his Mission



Martin—Martin Luther King, Jr. as a boy • Clark and Wallace—the sons of the local grocer

Daddy King—Martin's father • Medgar—Martin's friend • Mrs. King—Martin's mother

Narrators 1 and 2 • Viola and Lorraine—older women in Martin's church

Mrs. Conner—the grocer • Adult Martin—Martin Luther King, Jr. as an adult



NARRATOR 1: Martin Luther King, Jr. grew up in Georgia back in

the days when Babe Ruth was still hitting homeruns and movies were always filmed in

black and white.

**CLARK:** Pitch it, Wallace.

MARTIN: Can I play, too.

**NARRATOR 2:** Martin enjoyed singing and riding his bike. He

delivered newspapers. And he loved to play

baseball with two white boys in the

neighborhood.

**WALLACE:** Hey, yeah! Martin is on my team!





CLARK: Nuh uh! I get him. He played on your team last

time.

**WALLACE:** So? I called it! He's on my team.

**CLARK:** Don't try to push me around, Wallace. Else we'll

have to go to the grass!

**NARRATOR 1:** The boys would argue about who got to have

Martin on his team. Sometimes they would call each other names. Sometimes they would get into fistfights. But even as a young boy, Martin

was a peacemaker.

MARTIN: No sirs! My daddy says you shouldn't talk like

that. There will be no fighting neither.

**WALLACE:** Your daddy may be a preacher, but he ain't no

umpire.

MARTIN: I was on your team last time, Wallace. I'll play for

Clark today. That's fair.

WALLACE: I'm going to strike you out, Martin King! Just you

watch.

**MARTIN:** I'm not watching anything. Put it in here. I'm

going to hit a homerun!



### Scene 2 – the Ebenezer Baptist Church

**NARRATOR 2:** Martin's father was pastor of Ebenezer Baptist, a

church Martin's grandfather had started before

Martin was born.

They called Martin's father "Daddy King. **NARRATOR 1:** 

Just as the Good Book says, we must forgive our **DADDY KING:** 

> oppressors. Whether black or white, whether young or old, we must love our neighbors as

ourselves.

VIOLA: Look Lorraine, there's young Martin. Isn't he just

adorable?

LORRAINE: Martin, doesn't it make you proud to see your

father standing so tall before the congregation?

**MARTIN:** Yes, ma'am.

VIOLA: Are you going to follow in his footsteps, Martin?

Will you become a preacher like your daddy

someday?

**MARTIN:** No ma'am. I'm proud of my daddy, to be sure.

But when I grow up, my dream is to be a

shortstop.

MRS. KING: Hello, ladies. It's nice to see you both, but we

must be heading for home. It's a long walk.

LORRAINE: That's a fine child you have there, Mrs. King. I

pray I live long enough to see him up there

preachin' like his father.

**NARRATOR 2:** Martin didn't know it then, but Lorraine and

> Viola were right about him. Someday he'd be known as the Reverend Martin Luther King, just

like his father.

NARRATOR 1: But there would be some hard lessons along the

way.

#### Scene 3 -- the neighborhood grocery store

NARRATOR 2: Clark and Wallace's parents owned a small

grocery store near Martin's house.

**NARRATOR 1:** Martin thought it strange that whenever he and

his mother went to the market, instead of just walking across the street, they walked all the

way around the block to the back door.

MRS. KING: Excuse me, Mrs. Conner. I'd like two quarts of

milk and a pound of butter.

MRS. CONNER (sharply): Well you're just going to have to wait. There are

other customers in front of you.

**NARRATOR 2:** Sometimes the Kings, like all black customers,

had to wait to be served.

**MARTIN:** But, Mama, we were here before those people.

MRS. KING: That's just the way it is, Martin. Be polite and

keep your tongue.

**NARRATOR 1:** When they did get served, the grocers didn't

always treat them very well.

**MRS. CONNER** (rudely): Now, what is it you want?

MRS. KING: Two quarts of milk and a pound of butter.

MRS. CONNER: You'll have to pay before I go getting it. Do you

have your money?

**NARRATOR 2:** Though times were hard for many people, the

Kings weren't poor.

MRS. KING: Come now, Mrs. Conner. Have I ever *not* had my

money? We both know it has nothing to do with

whether or not I can afford it.

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MRS. CONNER: It's just I can never trust your kind.

MRS. KING: Our kind?

**MARTIN** (interrupting): Your boy Clark is quite a ball player, Mrs. Conner.

The other day he struck me out two times.

MRS. CONNER: You play ball with my boys?

**MARTIN:** Yes, ma'am. They're my best friends!

MRS. CONNER (rudely): They are, are they? Here are your goods, Mrs.

King. Head out the back.

MRS. KING: This milk seems mighty warm. Are you sure it's

still good?

MRS. CONNER: It's all I have. Take it or leave it.

### Scene 4 -- the sandlot

**NARRATOR 1:** The next time Martin went to play ball with the

grocer's boys, he brought his friend Medgar

along.

**NARRATOR 2:** But when they arrived at the sandlot, no one was

there.

**MEDGAR:** So where are they?

**MARTIN:** I don't know. We've been playing right here

every day after school.

**MEDGAR:** I think you're just making it up. You haven't been

playing with any white boys.

**MARTIN:** I don't have any reason to lie, Medgar. The other

day I hit a homerun off Wallace. It cleared the

fence right over there.

**MEDGAR:** Well then, why aren't they here?

**MARTIN:** You wait here. I'll go find them.

**NARRATOR 1:** Martin ran all the way to the grocer's house.

When he knocked on the door, Mrs. Conner

answered.

MRS. CONNER: Yes. What do you want? What are you doing on

my doorstep?

MARTIN: Where are your boys, Mrs. Conner? They were

supposed to play ball with me.

MRS. CONNER: Clark and Wallace can't play. They're . . . they're

sick in bed today.

**NARRATOR 2:** Martin could see past Mrs. Conner into the

house. Clark and Wallace were standing in the

shadows.

**NARRATOR 1:** Both boys were frowning, but Martin saw Clark

shyly wave.

**MARTIN:** Why no they're not, Mrs. Conner. They're right

there. Are you guys going to play ball today?

**NARRATOR 2:** Mrs. Conner stepped out on the porch and

closed the door behind her.

MRS. CONNER: They can't play ball with you anymore. They're

getting too old to be wastin' their time on the

likes of you.

**NARRATOR 1:** There was an awkward moment of silence as

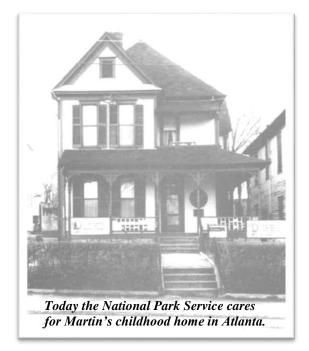
Martin tried to understand.

**NARRATOR 2:** And then he realized what she meant.

MRS. CONNER: Now you run along. And don't be knocking on my

door no more.

## Scene 5 -- the King house



MRS. KING:

**MARTIN:** 

MRS. KING:

**MARTIN:** 

MRS. KING:

**NARRATOR 2:** A few minutes later, Mrs. King found Martin hiding in the garden. He was crying.

MRS. KING: What's wrong, Martin. Are you hurt?

**MARTIN:** Mrs. Conner says that her boys can't play ball with me anymore. She says it's because I'm black.

MRS. KING: I'm sorry—I should have warned you. It was bound to happen sooner or later.

**MARTIN:** But why? Why does my skin color matter?

There are a lot of people around that don't like people who are different. In our case, some people are still bitter that we're no longer slaves.

But Clark and Wallace don't feel that way. They like me. We have fun together.

The boys may not feel that way, but their parents do. That's why they make us go through the back door of their store. That's why they serve their white customers first. That's why they give us sour milk. They're punishing us for being different. And they'll teach their children to do the same.

But that's not fair. How can they do that?

There are laws that allow them to discriminate

against us.

**NARRATOR 1:** Mrs. King was referring to *Jim Crow* laws. These

laws made it legal for white people to treat

blacks unfairly.

**NARRATOR 2:** Black people weren't allowed to use the same

restrooms as white people. In some restaurants

they weren't allowed to sit down.

**NARRATOR 1:** They weren't allowed to go to the same schools.

Often, they weren't allowed to vote.

**MARTIN:** Well, somebody needs to do something about it.

MRS. KING: Yes, Martin. Somebody does.

#### Scene 6 -- the sandlot

**NARRATOR 2:** Someday Martin would do something about Jim

Crow laws and other forms of discrimination.

**NARRATOR 1:** In 1955, at the age of 26, he'd become famous

for his leadership during the Montgomery Bus

Boycott.

**NARRATOR 2:** By 1965, he'd help pass the Civil Rights Act. But

back when he was a boy, he just wanted to play

ball.

**CLARK** (excited): Hey look, it's Martin!

MARTIN: Can I play?

**WALLACE:** Don't talk to him. Remember what Pa said.

**CLARK** (sadly): Sorry, Martin. We could use a shortstop, but our

pa says he'll whip us if we play with you.

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**WALLACE:** He says we shouldn't be wastin' our time with

your kind, so you best be goin'.

**MARTIN:** But what do *you* think? How come my skin color

didn't matter last week?

**WALLACE:** We don't want any trouble, Martin. We just do

what we're told.

#### Scene 7 -- at church & the Lincoln Memorial

**DADDY KING:** As it says in the Good Book, strive for peace with

all men. Stand up for yourself, speak your mind,

but always strive for peace.

**LORRAINE:** Preach, man, preach!

**NARRATOR 1:** Perhaps it was then that Martin first imagined

himself following in his father's footsteps.

**DADDY KING:** May the God of encouragement grant you to live

in harmony with one another, that together you may with one voice shout "Hallelujah!" to the

heavens!

VIOLA: Amen!

**NARRATOR 2:** Twenty-eight years after Martin was told by his

friends he couldn't play ball, he would preach to more than 200,000 people of every race and color at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C..

**ADULT MARTIN:** I have a dream that this nation will one day rise

up to live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men

are created equal."

**NARRATOR 1:** During those twenty-eight years Martin would

be arrested many times for standing up for

himself.

**ADULT MARTIN:** 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.

**NARRATOR 2:** He would be beaten, stabbed, and spit upon.

**ADULT MARTIN:** This will be a day when all God's children will be

able to sing with new meaning, "let freedom

ring."

**NARRATOR 1:** Yet through it all, Martin would follow his

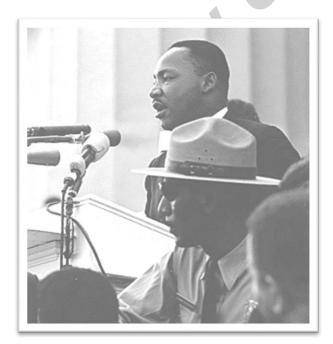
father's advice to strive for peace and harmony

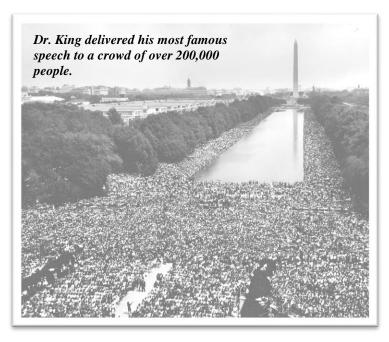
among all people.

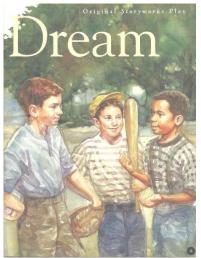
**ADULT MARTIN:** When we let freedom ring . . . we will be able to

speed up that day when all of God's children . . . will be able to join hands and sing . . . "Free at last. Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are

free at last." A







"Martin's Big Dream" was originally published under the title "I Have a Dream" in the Jan./Feb. 2000 issue of Scholastic's *Storyworks* magazine (*left*) to celebrate Black History Month and Martin Luther King Day. It tells the story of how a young Martin was prevented from playing baseball with two white boys in his neighborhood because of his race. The incident presumably influenced his activism for civil rights. The play is based on various biographies and King's own writing, but because much is conjectured, it is classified as historic fiction. The names of Martin's "friends," for example, have been lost to us. Please pre-read and pre-teach: This play contains authentic language including the phrase "coloreds," which comes from Dr. King's own account. There are also references to God and the Bible in King's speech. Parts for 12 students plus numerous non-speaking extras.

**Tech Note:** Having trouble printing? Pictures not showing up? Try opening your PDF viewer (such as Adobe) *before* opening the file containing this play.

To preserve picture quality, print directly from an open file rather than a copy.

**Instructions: 1.** Print a class set and assign parts. **2.** Have students use highlighters to mark their individual roles. **3.** Meet regularly for guided reading practice while having students practice their individual parts independently (such as for homework). **4.** When ready, practice "on stage." **5.** Perform in front of an audience. **6.** Hold a feedback and self-assessment session. **7.** Make use of the comprehension and extension activities. Note: Use only as a discussion-based classroom reading if content is too controversial.

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**Bubble Test Comprehension Activity** (CCSs Literature items 1, 4, 10). Have students cite evidence from the text when completing and reviewing. **Key:** 1. **b;** 2. **a;** 3. **a;** 4. **d;** 5. **b**; 6. **d;** 7. **c;** 8. **a;** 9. *answers will vary.* 

#### **Resources:**

<u>Martin Luther King, Jr.</u>, by Diane Patrick, 1990, Franklin Watts, NY

<u>Martin Luther King, Jr.</u>, <u>Free at Last</u>, by David Adler, 1993, Holiday House, NY

<u>Martin Luther King Day</u> by Linda Lowery, 1987, Carolrhoda Books, Minneapolis

<u>Martin Luther King</u> by Rosemary Bray, 1995, Greenwillow, NY

<u>Marching for Freedom</u> by Joyce Milton, 1987, Bantam, NY

<u>MLK Links: www.iei.uiuc.edu/web.pages/holidays/King.html</u>

#### **Extension Activities:**

- Listen to an MLK speech. King's "I Have a Dream" speech.
- Watch Civil Rights Movies. Disney's <u>Selma, Lord, Selma</u> and <u>Ruby Bridges</u> are geared toward young audiences and accurately depict the civil rights struggle.
- Enact alongside other plays. ReadAloudPlays.com has numerous Black History plays including plays about the Greensboro sit-ins, the bus boycott, and the Birmingham Children's Crusade.

**Photos**: All photos are believed to be in the Public Domain. If we are in error, please contact us at <a href="mailto:lewis@jeffnet.org">lewis@jeffnet.org</a>. Frontispiece: March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (PD US Gov.); Ebenezer Baptist interior view: author unknown (PD old); Martin at age 6: family photo (PD old); King birth home: National Park Service (PD US Gov.); King delivering "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial (PD US Gov.)

#### Martin's Big Dream -- Quiz



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Name:		Date:	

**Comprehension Test**: Select the best answer for each question. Be prepared to support your answers by locating evidence in the story. (CCSs Literature items 1, 4, 10)

- 1. Why did Martin and his mother have to go through the back door of the grocer?
- a. O The front door was locked.
- b. O Only white customers were allowed to use the front door.
- c. O It was a closer walk from their house.
- d. O The store was closed.
- 2. What were Jim Crow laws?
- a. O Laws that made it legal to treat African-Americans unfairly.
- b. O Laws against discrimination.
- c. O Laws that had to do with the separation of church and state.
- d. O None of these.
- 3. How did the incident with Clark and Wallace help prepare Martin for his future?
- a. O It showed him how people discriminated against African-Americans.
- b. O It taught him not to trust adults.
- c. O It made him give up his dream of being a baseball player.
- d. O It motivated him to attend college.
- 4. What did King mean when he said people should be judged by the content of their character?
- a. O Who we are inside is what's important.
- b. O We should be judged by our actions and behavior.
- c. O Our skin color or race shouldn't matter.
- d. O All of the above.

- 5. Martin met his friends at a sandlot. What do you think a sandlot is?
- a. O A playground with lots of sandboxes.
- b. O An open area where games such as baseball could be played.
- c. O A groomed baseball diamond in a city park.
- d. O The middle of a quiet street.
- 6. Why did Clark and Wallace refuse to play ball with Martin?
- a. O They didn't want to be around a person of color.
- b. O Martin wasn't a very good player.
- c. O They didn't think Martin was a nice person.
- d. O Their parents had told them not to.
- 7. Which is *not* a synonym for the word *oppressors* in the second scene?
- a. O bullies
- b. O slave drivers
- c. O neighbors
- d. O persecutors
- 8. In Scene 3, what is Mrs. King *implying* when she says, "We both know it has nothing to do with whether or not I can afford it."?
- a. O That the grocer is making her pay in advance as a way to insult her.
- b. O That African-American customers were used to paying in advance.
- c. O That the grocer needed to make change.
- d. O That paying in advance was no problem for her because she had plenty of money.



9. Dr. King devoted his life	to peace and harmony a	mong all people. What ar	e some ways you car
strive for peace?			