

Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Lesson

Overview: This lesson highlights the importance of service to our community as a part of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s remembrance and celebration. Teachers have the choice between three service activities for their class in the garden.

Objectives:

- In the classroom, students and teachers will learn about the life of Dr. King, and why our national holiday on MLK day is now a *Day of Service*.
- Students will work with a garden educator to perform a short service activity for their school garden.

Grade level: K-5th

Garden Educator Prep time: 30 minutes to set up materials, plus time to meet and coordinate with participating teacher(s)

Lesson time: 30 minutes

Materials needed:

- Suggested books:
 - *Martin's Big Words* by Doreen Rappaport
 - *El día de Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Mir Tamim Ansary
 - *Feliz cumpleaños, Martin Luther King* by Jean Marzollo
 - *A picture book of Martin Luther King* by David Adler
- Garden tools and work gloves for Options A and C (see Garden Activities below)
- Art supplies for Option B (see Garden Activities below- supplies depend on project chosen)

Space needed: A school garden

Staff needed: 1-3

Classroom Activities:

Classroom teacher will perform steps 1-4 with his or her students in the day(s) leading up to the service activity. A garden educator will come into the classroom or meet the students outside for the hands-on application of service and reflection.

1. Introduce Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to students by reading one of the suggested books (for grades K-5) or watching the short video (grades 4-5), *Legacy of Service*, at the following website: <http://constitutioncenter.org/learn/hall-pass/constitution-hall-pass-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-a-legacy-of-service>
2. Explain that Dr. King felt it was the responsibility of every person to serve others. Ask: When Coretta Scott King (Dr. King's wife) says that "the greatest gift that all people can give to Dr. King is service to your fellow man, "what do you think she means by *service*?"

What does it mean to serve others? Reinforce the idea that service happens when we see a need in our community and use our skills to help.

3. Explain that we have the opportunity to serve our school and community. What are some ways that you can help others in your school or community? Come up with a list with your class.
4. Explain that the students will be serving their school and community by helping their school's garden.

Garden Activities

A Garden Educator will visit the class to lead one of three different Community Service Options:

Option A: 30 minutes of garden service.

- This time will be spent in small group rotations of any of the following tasks:
- Starting seeds in the greenhouse
- Laying cardboard in pathways
- Filling wheelbarrows and/or buckets with bark chips
- Spreading bark chips in garden pathways.
- Being Weed Warriors
- Turning the compost pile

Option B: 30 minutes of garden art. Perform a service to the School Garden by making it more beautiful!

- Ideas for garden art abound on the Internet. Here is just one example:
 - *Veggie cloth prints.* Students will color cloth prints to be hung in the garden. Here is the link to this art project:
http://pennycarnival.typepad.com/penny_carnival/2010/08/garden-art-with-the-kids.html

Option C: Long-term Service Project—Brainstorm (older grades)

1. Students will go to the garden to observe and look for areas they can help with.
2. Back in the classroom, we will generate a list of garden-service ideas together.
3. The class will choose three do-able activities (or one activity that will be done three times), to be completed in the coming months for stints of 20-30 minutes each. (Garden educator and teacher will schedule those dates accordingly).
4. After we decide on service activities, students will reflect on why we serve and what it means to the school garden and school community.

Reflection: How did you feel while you were serving? How did your service make a difference? How do you think the people or things you helped felt? How could you tell?