

January 2002  
Grades 2-8

Future Leaders

by Perdita Finn

Each year, as it comes time to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, we hope that our students will be inspired by his famous words and courageous actions. We hope that these children in our schools will grow up to value justice and to work towards creating a better world. This month's activities offer your teachers activities they can do with their students to learn about the kinds of leaders -- both famous and ordinary -- our children might grow up to become.

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\*\*\* America's New Challenge \*\*\*

Up-to-date news and resources to address the recent real-world events in your classroom  
<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pbw0Ae>

\*\*\*\*\* CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES \*\*\*\*\*

For Grades 2-3

The Real Thing

What's the difference between a celebrity and a hero? For kids, often nothing. When asked to name someone they look up to, they mention a famous singer or athlete or movie star. As talented and successful as many of these men and women are, they are not necessarily heroes - people who have stepped beyond their personal ambitions to make a lasting difference in the world. The following activity will help your students differentiate between celebrities they enjoy and heroes they can emulate.

- \* Have students make a list of their "heroes." Collect them and write all the names on a large piece of paper you can save. It often helps children answer more freely if they know their lists will remain anonymous.

- \* Now fill your classroom with all kinds of biographies of people who made a difference. Try to find books and materials that students can read easily as you will want them to read about two to four different people over a couple of days.
- \* You may also want to make available online biographies of some people. (See the Scholastic Web Quests, below.)
- \* Tell students that they are reading biographies of heroes. Ask them, while they are reading, to think about what a hero is. What actions make somebody a hero?
- \* After students have read enough biographies (this may take a few days or a week, depending on your students), have them get together in small groups to talk about what makes a hero. Explain to them that they will have to support their ideas with specific information from the biographies.
- \* Come together as a class and create a classroom definition of a hero. Explain to your students that as you talk, you may find your ideas changing. That's okay! It just means you're thinking and learning!
- \* When you have a definition you all agree on, check out a dictionary's. How do they compare?
- \* Finally, ask your students again to make a list of their personal heroes. Collect them from the students (again, you may want to keep them anonymous), and put them on another piece of paper. Put both the original and final lists side by side, and note together how they have changed.
- \* For follow-up, you may want to encourage your students to find out more about one of the heroes they've become interested in!

## Local Heroes

Some of the people who make a difference in others' lives are in our own backyards and neighborhoods: teachers, family members, and even our peers. Invite your students to celebrate the achievements of these "local heroes," and practice doing primary research and writing biographies at the same time!

- \* Ask students to think of someone they know who has made a difference in their life or for somebody they know. For this assignment, it is important that the person is living and can be contacted. Have students freewrite what it is they admire about this person.
- \* Now explain to them that they will be writing a biography of their hero. In order to do so, they will have to interview the person and find out some stories about their life. Explain that they don't have to find out everything about this person but only information that is relevant to what the person does. For instance, if they are writing about a fireman, they will want to know why he became a fireman, stories from on the job, etc.

- \* Have students help each other create lists of questions in class. Also, they can do pretend interviews with each other for practice and add on any new questions to their lists.
- \* Create a certain time limit for getting the interviews done. While you are waiting for students to complete their interviews, they can be reading biographies of heroes to help them write their own.
- \* When you finish your biographies, you may want to have a publishing party and invite your local heroes to attend and listen to their stories! Be sure to give them a hero's welcome!

For Grades 4-8

Imagine...

Dreams: They can take us far. And the clearer those dreams are, the more likely we are to realize them. With this activity you will invite your students to daydream about the future and their role in making it a better place for everyone.

- \* Begin by having students brainstorm a list of at least ten specific things they would change or make happen so that the world would be a better place. Explain that writing a lot will help them discover the one thing they are most interested in.
- \* Have students share their lists and talk about them, encouraging them all the while to be more specific. As students hear each other's ideas, they may find themselves adding to their own.
- \* Now have students identify the one idea on their list that they care about the most.
- \* Tell them to shut their eyes and imagine it's twenty years in the future and they are at the center of making this change happen. Where are they? What are they doing? As soon as the picture is really clear, have them open their eyes and write about everything they imagine.
- \* Now from this picture your students can write stories about how they help the world in the future. You may want them to include in their stories how they accomplished their goals.
- \* Share your stories when you are done! And keep copies of them. Who knows? Twenty years from now you may watch them come true!

Footsteps to Follow In

Martin Luther King looked to Gandhi for inspiration. And Gandhi was inspired by the words and actions of Henry David Thoreau. It's so important for young people to have good footsteps to follow in. In this activity you can help your students discover that special someone who can serve as a lifelong guide for what they hope to accomplish.

- \* Based on the stories students wrote in the "Imagine" activity, have them identify what area they are most interested in being involved in for the future -- perhaps it's medicine or the

environment or world peace. This will be the area that they research using the question: "Who is making a difference in this field right now?"

\* Now using the Internet

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0JAF0Ae> is a good search engine for kids) have them find out what people are doing right now to make a difference. They should find the name of a person or group and what specifically they are involved in. Kids may want to ask their parents what their interests and areas of expertise are so they can also serve as resources for the class. (Doctors, for instance, can help direct students interested in medical research.)

\* Encourage students to find out as much as possible about what this person is doing and how she or he came to be involved in this work. Many organizations will answer questions by e-mail. Be sure to monitor any e-mail correspondence.

\* Finally, have students write about what they have learned. They should especially consider the question, "What should I be doing right now in order to be making a difference in the future?" You can also use the Scholastic.com Writing Workshop at <http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0JAL0Ak> on research writing. This step-by-step online workshop focuses on research skills. Students can publish their final work online!

\*\*\*\*\* ON SCHOLASTIC.COM \*\*\*\*\*

#### Related Activities and Resources

\* Instructor Idea Exchange: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Loads of great ideas for honoring the holiday from teachers all across America.

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0FTa0AM>

\* Heroes and Leaders Web Quests

Use the Internet to research famous heroes:

Eleanor Roosevelt

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcU0A6>

Frederick Douglass

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcW0A8>

Harriet Tubman

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcY0AB>

Joan of Arc

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcV0A7>

Thomas Jefferson

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcX0AA>

\* Historic Honor Rolls

Learn about African-Americans and women who changed history, and nominate them to these honor rolls.

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pca0AJ>

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcb0AK>

\* Keep the Cool

Dr. Bruce Perry offers suggestions for promoting nonviolence among your students.

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcZ0AC>

\* Character Education

Strategies for creating productive partnerships between school and families.

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0FT80Af>

\* Character Makes a Comeback

This Instructor magazine article details three successful programs for dealing with bullies, peer mediation, and conflict resolution.

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcc0AL>

\* Teacher Radio (Real Player required:

<http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0HuL0Aa>

Sharon Robinson is Jackie Robinson's daughter and Director of Education for Major League Baseball. She talks on Scholastic Teacher Radio about her book, "Jackie's Nine: Jackie Robinson's Values to Live By" and about her character development program Breaking Barriers. <http://teachermail.scholastic.com/cgi-bin3/flo?y=eJze0hMuS0jd0pcd0AM>

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Perdita Finn is a former teacher who now writes about education. Her books include "Teaching Memoir Writing" and "Awesome Activities to Help Reluctant Writers Succeed."

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\*\*\*\*\* RELATED BOOKS \*\*\*\*\*

Lucky January

Abe Lincoln Remembers

The early life of an important leader. Find out what made him great!

Harry Potter Boxed Set

Loyalty, love, compassion -- that's what distinguishes Harry, a character J. K. Rowling has based on the classic heroes of old: King Arthur, Achilles, etc.

Martin's Big Words

Discover how the pen can be mightier than the sword!

The Quiltmaker's Gift

A king learns a lesson about real leadership in this heartwarming new fairy tale.

Arrow January

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

Ordinary people who made a difference. An inspiring story of the South before Civil Rights

Lady of Chi'iao Kuo

She saved her people -- 1,500 years ago in China!

The Good Fight

The soldiers of World War II and what they fought for.

I Have a Dream

The complete text of the famous speech with amazing pictures!

Jackie's Nine

Quotes from Jackie Robinson on values.

TAB January

Teens Can Make it Happen

A step-by-step guide to realizing your dreams!

Dear Ellen Beet

The true story of two women who risked their lives to fight slavery.

The Lord of the Rings Boxed Set

How a little hobbit dared to save Middle Earth.

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Below are some additional books to accompany these classroom activities. You'll find these titles in your local bookstore or library, or you can call 1-800-SCHOLASTIC to order.

Grades PreK-1

"Winter Poems," by Barbara Rogasky, illus. Trina Schart Hyman, 0-590-42873-X, \$5.99 paperback

"Blizzards!" by Lorraine Jean Hopping, illus. Jody Wheeler, 0-590-39730-3, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"Clifford's First Snow Day," by Norman Bridwell, 0-590-03480-4, \$3.25 paperback (Also available in Spanish: La primera nevada de Clifford, 0-590-63097-0, \$3.25)

"The First Snow," by David Christiana, 0-590-22855-2, \$15.95 hardcover

"Here Comes the Snow!" by Angela Shelf Medearis, illus. Maxie Chambliss, 0-590-26266-1, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"One Snowy Day," by Jeffrey Scherer, 0-590-74240-X, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"I Am Snow," by Jean Marzollo, illus. Judith Moffatt, 0-590-64174-3, \$3.50 Hello Reader paperback

"Rabbit's Wish for Snow," by Tchin, illus. Carolyn Ewing, 0-590-69767-6, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"Snow Shapes: A Read and Do Book," by Judith Moffatt, 0-439-09858-0, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"Snow? Let's Go!", by Karen Berman Nagel, 0-439-09906-4, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"The Biggest, Best Snowman," by Margery Cuyler, illus. Will Hillenbrand, 0-590-13922-3, \$15.95 hardcover

#### Grades 2-3

"Abraham Lincoln," by Amy L. Cohn and Suzy Schmidt, illus. David A. Johnson, 0-590-93566-6, \$16.95 hardcover

"The Story of Ruby Bridges," by Robert Coles, illus. George Ford, 0-590-57281-4, \$15.95 hardcover

"You Forgot Your Skirt, Amelia Bloomer!", by Shana Corey, illus. Chesley McLaren, 0-439-07819-9, \$16.95 hardcover

"Hunt for the Past: My Life as an Explorer," by Sue Hendrickson, illus. Richard Courtney, 0-439-27191-6, \$3.99 paperback (about the scientist who discovered "Dinosaur Sue")

"Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King," by Jean Marzollo, illus. Brian Pinkney, 0-590-44065-9, \$15.95 hardcover

"The Real McCoy," by Wendy Towle, illus. Wil Clay, 0-590-48102-9, \$5.99 paperback (about the African-American inventor/engineer who originated the statement "The Real McCoy")

"Great Black Heroes: Five Brave Explorers," by Wade Hudson, illus. Ron Garnett, 0-590-48032-4, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"Great Black Heroes: Five Notable Inventors," by Wade Hudson, illus. Ron Garnett, 0-590-48033-2, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"Great Black Heroes: Five Brilliant Scientists," by Lynda Jones, illus. Ron Garnett, 0-590-48031-6, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

"A Girl Named Helen Keller," by Margo Lundell, illus. Irene Trivas, 0-590-47963-6, \$3.99 Hello Reader paperback

Grades 4-8

"Happy Birthday, Martin Luther King," by Jean Marzollo, illus. Brian Pinkney, 0-590-44065-9, \$15.95 hardcover

"The Day Martin Luther King Jr. Was Shot: A Photo History of the Civil Rights Movement," by Jim Haskins, 0-590-43661-9, \$5.99 paperback

"If You Lived at the Time of Martin Luther King," by Ellen Levine, illus. Anna Rich, 0-590-42582-X, \$5.99 paperback

"I Have a Dream: The Story of Martin Luther King," by Margaret Davidson, 0-590-44230-9, \$4.50 paperback

"I Have a Dream" (the text of the speech), illustrated by 15 Coretta Scott King Award artists, 0-590-20516-1, \$16.95 hardcover

"The Life and Words of Martin Luther King" (includes speeches, sermons, photos), by Ira Peck, 0-590-43827-1, \$4.50 paperback