

Street Resilience

I Have a Dream

Spatial Requirements: Regular classroom setup; little or no space required

Activity Type: Group

Grades: 5-12

Group Size: 1 or more

Time: 30 minutes

Introduction: This “thought” activity allows students to reflect on an issue of racism, discrimination, or segregation that they are passionate about, and brainstorm on what can be done to turn things around.

Materials:

- Pen and paper for each student
- “I Have a Dream” speech excerpt sheet OR “I Have a Dream” speech excerpt video from YouTube (one example is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDWWy4CMhE>)

Activity:

Together as a group, read or listen to an excerpt of Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. If you have students read the speech, print it out and give each student a copy so they can highlight their favorite parts as you read.

Discuss some of the history surrounding this speech – what effects did it have on the African-American community? What changes did this speech bring about?

Discuss racism in the 21st century. What kind of racism do we see in our school? In our community? In the media? What other kinds of discrimination exist in these areas?

Now it is time for students to come up with their own “dream speech” for the future. Have them write about some segregation, discrimination, or racism that they would like to see changed, and how they would go about changing it. This may also be given as a homework assignment so students can put more thought into their speeches.

Invite students to share their speeches with the class.

Processing the Experience:

- How did Martin Luther King, Jr. use the pain and discrimination he was experiencing in a positive way? Was his energy directed toward a person or a cause?
- What can be done in our school and community to support Martin Luther King, Jr.’s dream?
- What can the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. teach us about what one person can do to make a difference?
- Martin Luther King, Jr. knew what he stood for. Why do you think this is important for a person who is trying to make a difference?