



**BELOVED
COMMUNITY,
BELOVED
CONNECTIONS**



2021 MLK DAY CELEBRATION

Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan present

**The 35th Annual State of Minnesota
Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

2021 MLK DAY DISCUSSION GUIDE

Purpose

This Martin Luther King, Jr. Day discussion guide is designed as a resource for schools and families to help foster a dialogue to honor and celebrate Dr. King. While the MLK Day holiday takes place on January 18, 2021, Dr. King's legacy for justice and love, and his work to end racism and poverty, is a fitting discussion for any day.

Join the 2021 MLK Day Celebration

You can watch the 2021 MLK Celebration beginning on January 18 at 10:30 am on [Governor Walz's YouTube page](#). The video is about 40 minutes and will be available indefinitely.

Before watching the celebration, consider watching and/or reading [Hair Love](#).

The 2021 MLK Day Celebration features a conversation with Matthew A. Cherry. He is an awarding-winning director, writer, and producer.

Matthew A. Cherry is best known for his animated short film and book, [Hair Love](#), that follows the relationship between Zuri, her natural hair, and her father. It is a powerful story about family, love, and loving ourselves.

In addition to the conversation with Matthew A. Cherry, you'll hear the singing of the Black National Anthem, Lift Every Voice and Sing, remarks from Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan, and messages from students.

For more information and to download graphics, visit [this website](#).



About the Dr. King Celebration

Each year, the Governor and Lieutenant Governor host the Annual State of Minnesota Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration. This event is an opportunity for community to come together, reflect and build on the legacy of Dr. King, strengthen connections, and celebrate Black excellence.

About the 2021 Theme

For 2021, the theme for the celebration is **Beloved Community, Beloved Connections.**

Dr. King's vision of a **Beloved Community** is a society that embraces justice and love, actively works to end racism and poverty, and builds a community where we can thrive. At a time when many of us feel disconnected from each other due to COVID-19, we need to remember to embrace our **Beloved Connections**. We are interconnected. We are interdependent. And we need each other.



Fast Facts

- Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929.
- MLK Day is a federal holiday held on the third Monday of January.
- The holiday celebrates Dr. King's strong advocacy for social change, most notably, to end racial discrimination and poverty.
- Dr. King went to jail nearly 30 times for acts of 'civil disobedience.' It was in April of 1963, from jail, that Dr. King wrote Letter from Birmingham Jail arguing that everyone has a moral responsibility to act boldly and swiftly. He stressed: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." ([View the document.](#) [Listen to audio.](#))
- Dr. King was a fierce advocate for voting rights, working hard to end the patterns of systemic disenfranchisement such as poll taxes and literacy tests. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965 with Dr. King and other civil rights leaders in attendance.
- Dr. King received the Nobel Peace Prize for combating racial inequality through nonviolence.
- Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated on April 4, 1968.
- Wish Dr. King a happy birthday on MLK Day and play the song "[Happy Birthday](#)" that was written, produced, and performed by Stevie Wonder as part of the movement to name MLK Day.

Dive Deeper

- [Scholastic: How Do You Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day?](#)
- [Stanford University: The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute](#)
- [PBS: Martin Luther King Jr. Civil Rights Leader](#)
- [Teaching Tolerance: Teaching MLK with the Social Justice Standards](#)

Vocabulary Terms

Beloved Community – a society that embraces justice and love, actively works to end racism and poverty, and builds a community where we can thrive

Boycott – to refuse, as an act of protest, to participate in a certain event or buy particular products

Civil Rights – the rights that allow people to live freely with dignity and joy, free from discrimination

Discrimination – prejudiced outlook, action, or treatment towards another person or group of people because of their actual or perceived differences, including those based on race, sexual orientation, ability, gender, age, national origin, immigration or citizenship status, etc.

Human Rights – rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all persons

Jim Crow – describing laws and practices that discriminated against African Americans after the Civil War – a war between opposing groups of citizens of the same country

Intersectionality – how aspects of someone's identities (gender, race, class, sexual orientation, ability status, mental health, and others) combine to create different systems of discrimination and privilege

Protest – a declaration of opinion commonly a formal objection against some act

Racism – behavior or attitudes that reflect and foster beliefs that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race

Segregation – the separation of people by race, ethnic group, gender, class, or personal orientation

Sit-in – a protest in which people seat themselves somewhere and refuse to move until their demands are met

DISCUSSION IDEAS

Discussions help improve students' abilities to have deep sustained conversations. Keep in mind, age-appropriateness when selecting and framing resources, prompts, and questions for discussion.

Prompt 1: Legacy of Dr. King

Commit to continuing the dialogue on racial justice and anti-Black attitudes, pursuing social justice, and service to others, reflect on keeping Dr. King's dream alive.

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. What actions do we take to end racism?
2. How do we build a Beloved Community together?
3. How do joy and love build the foundations of a Beloved Community?

Dr. King's vision of a Beloved Community is a society that embraces justice and love, actively works to end racism and poverty, and builds a community where we can thrive. We are interconnected. We are interdependent. And we need each other.

Prompt 2: Identity Intersectionality

Consider overlapping identities and experiences; participate in dynamic conversations about the differences of experiences among people; include how historical and systematic oppression may impact some identities differently than other identities; reflect on Hair Love and the conversation with Matthew A. Cherry.

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. What are all your identities– all of which come together to make you unique, complex, and beautiful? Think about race, sex, religion, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Also think of identities such as athlete, actor, singer, and quilter.
2. What are some historical and/or systems of oppression or discrimination that may impact some identities differently than other identities?
3. How do we honor and love our complex, intersectional identities?

Prompt 3: Comprehensive History

Push beyond the scripted narratives in history books for a more holistic understanding; contextualize contemporary issues; reflect on the moment we are in now.

Suggested Discussion Questions

1. What are some pivotal moments in history that go on to shape our society for decades? (The day Dr. King was killed, the AIDS crisis, 9/11, etc.)
2. We are currently in the middle of another pivotal moment in history, with COVID-19, the civil unrest following the death of George Floyd, and the violent and hateful attack on the U.S. Capitol. How is this moment impacting you?
3. What do you think Dr. King would want us to focus on in this moment in history?



DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

Consider using the following suggestions as guidelines for constructing your discussion prompts:

1. Start your discussion with a specific event, reading, quote, or other anchor method:

- a. On page _____, I noticed a similarity to _____.
- b. I chose this quote _____ for this reason _____.
- c. The topic of _____ interests me because _____.

2. Go beyond comprehension. It helps to clarify vocabulary and include context, but the focus is on sustained discussion that offers students the opportunity to delve deeper into content. Use questions that are open-ended (“tell me more”):

- a. Have you (or someone you know) experienced a similar conflict?
- b. What is the long-term effect of this problem?
- c. Is there something more important we should be considering?

3. For strong discussion questions, incorporate **Habits of Mind!** (creative and critical thinking) to deepen conversations:

- a. Listening to others - with understanding and empathy (Habit #3)
 - i. Paraphrase another person’s feelings
 - ii. What is being said beneath the words?
- b. Applying past knowledge to new situations (Habit #8)
 - i. Draw from one event and apply it in another context
 - ii. This reminds me of...

4. Thought provoking involves the use of **critical thinking** that improves learning in any content area. For example, critical thinkers question information, conclusions and points of view; they think beneath the surface. Cultivate critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improve it:

- a. Purpose (goals, objectives)
- b. Question at issue (problem, issue)
- c. Information (data, facts, reasons, observations, experience, evidence)
- d. Interpretation and Inference (conclusions, solutions)
- e. Concepts (theories, definitions, laws, principles, models)
- f. Assumptions (presuppositions, axioms, taking for granted)
- g. Implications and Consequences
- h. Point of View (frames of reference, perspectives, orientations)



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