



## Life in Atlanta (K-5)

### Learning Targets/Objectives:

- Recognize Georgia, Atlanta, and Dr. King's childhood home on a map.
- Identify the parents and siblings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Make connections to Dr. King's birth name, nickname, birth date, and birthplace.
- Explain the role of the church in Dr. King's childhood and the impact it made on his life.
- Relate the family, childhood, and influences of Dr. King to one's own.

### Success Criteria:

- Students will create a family tree identifying all members.
- Students will identify a family member who has influenced them.

### Lesson Content Overview:

The second child and first son born to Martin Luther King, Sr. and Mrs. Alberta Williams King, Martin Luther King, Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia. He grew up in a two-story home at 501 Auburn Road, part of an affluent neighborhood known as "Sweet Auburn." He had an older sister, Christine, and younger brother, Alfred Daniel (A.D.). His sister, Christine (Faris) became an Associate Professor at Spelman College, the Vice Chair and Treasurer of The King Center, an active public speaker, and author of a children's book about her brother, *My Brother Martin*. A.D. became an ordained minister.

As for Dr. King, his family and close friends fondly called him M.L. Originally named Michael Luther, he was known as an intelligent boy who was very healthy, curious, sensitive, and bright. When his father, Michael Luther, Sr., or "Daddy King," changed his name to Martin Luther, he also changed his son's name. Young King credits his positive home life and loving parents for why "it is quite easy for me to lean more toward optimism than pessimism about human nature."<sup>1</sup> Throughout his life, King's strong family foundation gave him the blueprint he needed to reach his creative potential.

King dedicated his life to God between the ages of five and seven after joining his family church, Ebenezer Baptist Church, during the congregation's spring revival of 1936.<sup>2</sup> Guest evangelist Rev. H. H. Coleman, from Detroit's Macedonia Baptist Church and who led the revival, inspired King. On May 1, 1936, King was baptized. As he notes in *The Autobiography of Religious Development*, "The church has always been a second home for me. As far back as I can remember, I was in church every Sunday. My best friends were in Sunday school, and it was the Sunday school that helped me to build the capacity for getting along with people."<sup>3</sup>

Just as the church greatly influenced his life, King also greatly impacted the church and congregations across the country. In his sermon, "Three Dimensions of a Complete Life," King addressed the subject of completeness as it relates to one's life.

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther King, Jr. "An Autobiography of Religious Development." September 12, 1950 to November 22, 1950. Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, PA.

<sup>2</sup> In "An Autobiography of Religious Development," King claims he was five years old when he joined the Ebenezer Baptist Church. However, in King's Crozer application, he mentions that he joined Ebenezer on May 1, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> King, Jr. "An Autobiography of Religious Development."



*You know, they used to tell us in Hollywood that in order for a movie to be complete, it had to be three-dimensional. Well, this morning I want to seek to get over to each of us that if life itself is to be complete, it must be three-dimensional.*

*And there are three dimensions of any complete life to which we can fitly give the words of this text: length, breadth, and height. Now the length of life as we shall use it here is the inward concern for one's own welfare. In other words, it is that inward concern that causes one to push forward, to achieve his goals and ambitions. The breadth of life as we shall use it here is the outward concern for the welfare of others. And the height of life is the upward reach for God. Now you got to have all three of these to have a complete life.*

King was succeeded in death by his mother, Alberta, who was killed by a gunman in June 1974 while playing the organ during church service. His father, Martin Luther, Sr., died ten years later of a heart attack after Church service, on Sunday, November 11, 1984. "Daddy" King's funeral lasted nearly four hours. Present were former President Jimmy Carter, then-Vice President George H.W. Bush, Georgia Governor Joe Frank Harris, Rev. Jesse Jackson, and Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young. President Bush called "Daddy" King a "true American hero" with achievements that "will live in the hearts not only of the American people, but of all those who hunger for freedom and equality anywhere in the world." He added, King Sr. spent his life "doing God's work."<sup>4</sup>

Rev. Jesse Jackson's words were perhaps the most poignant. "[W]hen you hear the name Martin Luther King you think of justice, human rights, morality, love and character," Jackson said. "He was a shepherd of a royal flock, father to a nation, not merely a family. From seeds of his body blossomed the flower that liberated a people and touched the soul of a nation."

One of the last things King Sr. said serves as an affirmation to King Jr.'s claim that his family gave him the blueprint for nonviolent struggle. After living through the murders of his son and wife, King Sr. said, "I don't hate either one," about the two shooters. "There is no time for that and no reason. Nothing that a man does takes him lower than when he allows himself to fall so low as to hate anyone."<sup>5</sup>

#### **SEL Opener:**

- OPTION 1: Show a picture/pictures of YOU as a child with/of your family.
- OPTION 2: Show and explain where you grew up and identify the members of your family.
- OPTION 3: Show a picture of Dr. King as a child/as a child with his parents and siblings.
  - **Discussion Questions:** *Do you recognize anyone in this picture? Who knows Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.? Where is he in this picture?*
  - Show Dr. King as an adult and say: *It is time to get to know Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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<sup>4</sup> George H.W. Bush quoted in UPI, AP Reports. "Political elite and the unsung mourn King at funeral." *The Sacramento Bee*. November 16, 1984. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Luther King, Sr. quoted in Ibid.



### Instructional Activities:

- Activity 1: Watch [The Story of Martin Luther King, Jr. by Kid President](#) (0:00 - 2:35)
- Activity 2: Read *My Brother Martin* by Christine King Farris
  - Discuss the characters, plot, feelings, vocabulary, summary, and themes.
- Activity 3: Display the [Georgia to ATL to Birth Home Slides](#).
  - Discuss the location of Georgia in comparison to your state.
  - **Geography:** Have students identify Atlanta on the map.
  - Discuss the similarities and differences between Dr. King's birth home and their own.
- Activity 4: Take a Virtual Tour of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birth home:
  - Start the National Park Service Tour [HERE](#)
  - [Self-Guided Tour Worksheet](#)
- Activity 5: Read and Discuss the [All About Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Fact Sheet](#)
  - *Individual Work:* [All About Me Worksheet](#)
  - *Large Group Discussion:* Have each student present their "All About Me" facts.
  - *Discussion Questions:* *How was Dr. King different from me? How was Dr. King like me?*
- Activity 6:
  - OPTION A: Watch and Discuss [Students with King Virtual Tour](#)
    - Complete the [Guided Notes](#) / [Answer Key](#)
  - OPTION B: Watch and Discuss [Drive Thru History: MLK's Childhood Years](#)
    - Complete the [Guided Notes](#) / [Answer Key](#)
  - **Discussion Questions:** *How was Dr. King's childhood different from your childhood? How was Dr. King's childhood similar to your childhood?*
    - Acknowledge the themes among students' answers.

### Assessments:

- **OPTION 1:**
  - Complete the family tree worksheet by filling in the name and birth date (if known) for each relative.
    - **Resource:** <https://freefamilytreetemplates.com/>
- **OPTION 2:**
  - **PROMPT:** *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was greatly influenced by his father and the church. Choose a person from your family who has influenced you. Draw a picture of the person and write a short letter to the person explaining why you chose them.*



## **Adaptations for Student Needs**

### **IEP:**

- Sizes of student groups range
- Students team up with a peer partner, while others would prefer to work individually.
- There is a variety of small-group work
- Chunking information
- Visual cues and wait time
- Visual supports (maps, images, PowerPoint slides, handouts)
- Assessments will be modified, and students given extra time

### **ELD/ELL/ESL**

- Modified/simplified reading material
- Content-related lists/handouts of key terms
- Text is supported by visuals and connected to real-life experiences