

THE MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CENTER
FOR NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE, INC.

BELOVED COMMUNITY TEACH-IN

FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATORS



2026 LESSON PLAN: 3-5



MLK Holiday Teach-In 2026

Grade Level: Grades 3-5

Lesson Title: My Blueprint for Building a Better Future

Theme: Mission Possible II: Uniting a Nation. Building a Future. The Nonviolent Way.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Explore the meaning of dignity, purpose, and nonviolence through the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Reflect on their own value and contributions to the classroom, school, and community.
- Create their own personal “blueprint” for building a united and fair future using peaceful strategies.

Success Criteria

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Paraphrase part of Dr. King’s message about dignity and purpose.
- Identify at least two actions they can take to promote peace and fairness.
- Create a personal “blueprint” that visually or verbally represents how they will contribute to a better future.

Core Texts

Excerpt from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1967 speech to students in Philadelphia:

“Number one in your life’s blueprint should be a deep belief in your own dignity, your worth and your own somebody-ness. Don’t allow anybody to make you feel that you are nobody... always feel that you count. Always feel that you have worth, and always feel that your life has ultimate significance.”

Martin Luther King Jr: “What is Your Life’s Blueprint”

<https://youtu.be/Q9spMeeBPPY?si=PT27krOXGR-W1lj3>



Instructional Steps (45–50 minutes)

1. Warm-Up Discussion (5–7 minutes)

Prompt students:

- “What does it mean to have a plan for the future?”
- “Have you ever built something from a plan or set of directions?”
- “Why might someone need a blueprint for their life?”

2. Close Reading of Dr. King’s Words (7–12 minutes)

- Read the passage aloud twice. First for meaning, second for emphasis.
- Discuss vocabulary: dignity, somebody-ness, worth, blueprint. (See Glossary)
- Ask:
 - “What do you think Dr. King meant by ‘somebody-ness’?”
 - “How do you show that you believe in yourself?”
 - “What kind of future do you want to help build?”
- Teachers may choose to show a video of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “What is Your Life’s Blueprint,” <https://youtu.be/Q9spMeeBPPY?si=PT27krOXGR-WI1j3>

3. Create a Sample Blueprint (5 minutes)

- Show a simple sketch or chart labeled: “My Blueprint for a Better Future”
- Example sections: “What I Believe,” “What I Stand For,” “What I Will Do to Help Others”

4. Activity: Students Create Their Own Blueprints (15–20 minutes)

- Use folded paper or printed templates with labeled boxes:
 - My Strengths
 - What I Believe In
 - A Problem I Want to Help Fix
 - What I Will Do (at school, at home, in the world)
- Students may write or draw.



5. Share and Celebrate (5 minutes)

- Volunteers share part of their blueprint.
- Display in hallway or on a bulletin board titled: “Mission Possible: Builders of a Better Future”

Reflection Questions

- Why is it important to believe in yourself and others?
- How can our personal blueprints help unite people?
- What peaceful actions can you take to help your classroom or community?

Optional Extensions

- Students work in small groups to create a Classroom Blueprint for peace and fairness.
- Invite students to create a “Future Me” timeline, starting from today’s blueprint.

Curriculum Connections

- **ELA:** Reading comprehension, speaking and listening, personal reflection
- **Social Studies:** Civic responsibility, historical figures, problem-solving
- **Character-Based Learning:** Self-awareness, social responsibility, future planning

Accommodations & Supports

Supports for IEP and 504 Needs

- Pre-read the quotes/reading in small groups prior to the lesson.
- Provide copies of the selected Dr. King excerpt with key words bolded and vocabulary defined.
- Offer writing scaffolds (sentence starters, graphic organizers).
- Allow oral responses, drawing, or dictated answers as alternatives to writing.
- Use visuals and checklists for multi-step directions.



Supports for Reading Differences

- Read the excerpt aloud slowly and with emphasis.
- Use partner reading or echo reading to support fluency.
- Provide a simplified version alongside the original text.
- Highlight key vocabulary: dignity, blueprint, purpose, future.

Supports for English Language Learners

- Pre-teach vocabulary with visuals and examples.
- Use native language support where available.
- Allow students to share their blueprint in their home language or through visuals.

Supports for Character-Based Learning Needs

- Create a respectful and affirming classroom environment for sharing personal ideas.
- Offer calm-down or reflection areas as needed.
- Emphasize that *all voices are valuable*—there is no “wrong” blueprint.

Key Vocabulary

- **Blueprint** - a plan or design for building something
- **Dignity** - knowing you are valuable and should be treated with respect
- **Justice** - fairness for everyone
- **Nonviolence** - a love-centered way of thinking, speaking, acting, and engaging that leads to personal, cultural and societal transformation. (*Adaptation for 3-5: Nonviolence means using love and respect to think, speak, and act without causing harm.*)
- **Somebody-ness** - you matter and have something special to offer
- **Unity** - working together toward a common goal
- **Worth** - you have value; you are special and your life matters